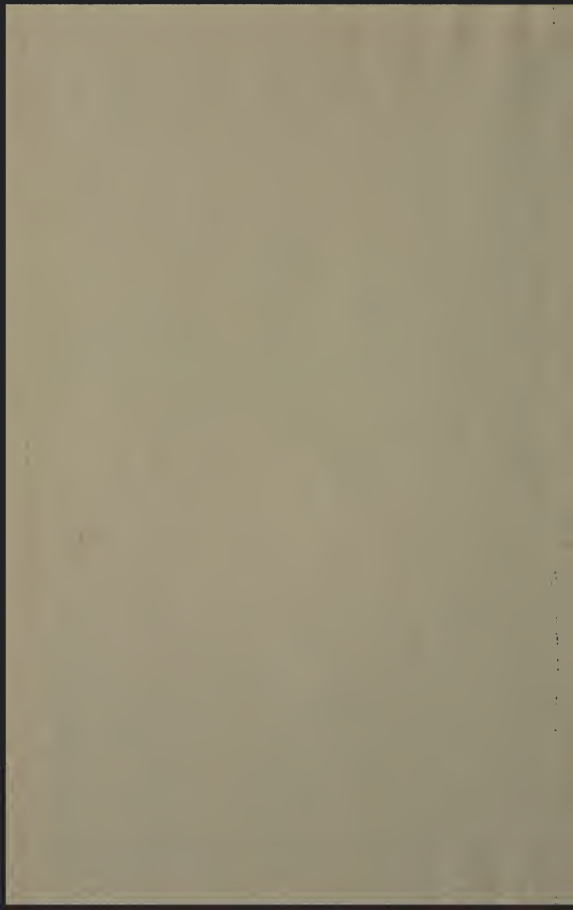


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A Log of the Texas-California Cattle Trail, 1854

JAMES G. BELL



Edited by
J. Evetts Haley



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INTRODUCTION

While Texas was yet under the dominion of Spain, cattle were trailed in and horses were trailed out of the province. Soon after the beginning of Anglo-American settlement, and during the two decades following, herds of cattle were driven from the Texas ranges to New Orleans, to Natchez, to Natchitoches, and to Shreveport. Markets were discovered to the northeast, and in the late forties and throughout the fifties there was a steadily growing movement of cattle to points in Missouri—to St. Louis and to Sedalia in particular. Other herds went into Ohio and Illinois, some trailing to a pioneer market at Chicago. The trade was growing in many directions when the outbreak of the Civil War closed these markets before trail driving had achieved a very definite technique of its own.¹

In the meantime the Mexican War had been fought, California had been acquired, and her gold discovered. In the late forties and early fifties her mountains and valleys were teeming with miners—hard working outdoor men who demanded a heavy ration of beef. Naturally, the price of meat rose with that of other necessities. At that time there were no western railroads; refrigeration of meat in transit was unknown; and the movement of live cattle by water was in its experimental stage. But the longhorn furnished his own transportation to market. He marched with the free stride of a horse, cut down rocky trails with hoofs of flint, and crossed long desert stretches without a drink of water. For some twenty years constantly increasing herds of cattle had ranged the lush grass-lands of Texas. The Texans had much beef to sell, but few places to sell it. But now California needed the beef that Texas had, and Texas cowmen ventured upon the long trail of some fifteen hundred hazardous miles.

Perhaps of all the trails the Texans blazed, no other traversed such a forbidding land. From end to end it was a trail of dangers and uncertainties—long dry drives that set cattle mad with thirst and drew saddle horses to “skin and bones”; alkaline lakes that poisoned and killed thirsting herds; *malpais* ridges that cut hoofs to the quick and set the riders afoot; and the eternal threat of loss

¹There is no basis for the rather general impression, perhaps attributable to the writings of Emerson Hough and the featuring, in print, of the recollections of Texas trail drivers, that trailing of cattle began with the end of the War.

to white and Indian thieves. And yet, of all the American trails followed by men who rode in the dust of cattle, no other is so little known. It came into existence at the middle of the nineteenth century; it passed into tradition within approximately twenty years. The bow-legged men who drove its trying course are dead; the brief contemporary allusions to its history are buried beneath the dust of years. But from a few scattered sources something of the story may be sifted out.

Oral tradition tells of a herd that was driven to California in 1848 by T. J. Trimmier, from Washington County, Texas. The five hundred beeves said to have been in the drive, sold in California at one hundred dollars a head. Trimmier turned back to Texas in 1849, and met herd after herd upon the trail.²

Whatever may be the limitations of traditional sources, it is a fact that in the early spring of 1849 a large caravan gathered at Fredericksburg, on the Texas frontier, and prepared to start to California with "three or four thousand horses and mules . . . besides numerous herds of cattle."³

Almost overnight Houston and San Antonio became important emigrant markets for mules, which were sometimes hard to obtain because the Comanches kept them stolen away.⁴ But as the stampede to the coast continued, herds of cattle were gathered and pointed west each year, and by 1854 the movement seemed to be at its height.⁵

"The speculation of driving beef cattle from our State to California," observed *The Colorado Tribune* of July 21, 1854, "still continues, and doubtless a regular trade will be made of it for some years to come." The prophecy proved true even though the drives of that year were none too profitable. The next year, though Californians were buying cattle in the State at from six to seven dollars a head, Texas "noticed a general decline in the California demand for cattle."⁶ Yet the long treks westward from Texas continued until the outbreak of the War.⁷

²T. A. Morrison to J. Evetts Haley, September 11, 1931.

³*Telegraph* (Houston), March 8, 1849.

⁴The same, March 1, March 15, and April 12, 1849.

⁵Michael Erskine, MS., "Diary, 1854," pp. 41, 47-48, 68-69, 143; *Galveston Journal*, May 26, 1854; *Texas State Gazette*, July 29, 1854, and April 21, 1855.

⁶*Texas State Gazette*, April 21 and August 18, 1855.

⁷*The Weekly Independent* (Belton), May 2, 1857, and July 24, 1858;

Immediately after the War there was a revival of the trade for a few years, as herds passed up the Goodnight Trail and turned west, through southern New Mexico, to intersect the old trail in the Rio Grande country. But California was still an uncertain market, the northern trails were more promising of profit to the driver, and the cattle trail to California became a matter of ruts and memory.

Among the men who drove in 1853 was one James Campbell, of San Antonio. He left Eagle Pass, on the Mexican border, and four months later reached Warner's Ranch near San Diego. His trip was successful. He came back to Texas with a story of the trail, a log of its course, and money to spend. He drove again the next year,⁸ and there were many other herds upon the trail to keep him company.

Campbell had probably talked to and influenced some of the owners. Michael Erskine, from nearby Seguin, carried a "Memo of Mr Campbells rout to California" as he drove a herd of more than a thousand head.⁹ It is extremely likely, too, that Campbell talked with his fellow-townsmen, John James, and told him of the profits and perhaps some of the hardships of the drive to California. But prospective profits are always vivid and near, while hazards are vague and far away. So among the outfits on the trail that year was one owned by John James, a frontiersman of note, a pioneer surveyor, a dealer in lands and a man of parts. He carried a large outfit for protection, some members of which were anxious emigrants on their way to the west coast. Among them was a young man of twenty-two, named James G. Bell.¹⁰ From the historian's point of view, it is fortunate that he was a tenderfoot. The West was fresh to his eyes, the life on the trail was novel, and the terrain and its natural history were interesting. As a conse-

Don H. Biggers, *Shackelford County Sketches*, in chapter upon *Early Settlers*, pp. not numbered; *The Daily Herald*, San Antonio, August 4, 1859.

⁸*The Colorado Tribune*, July 21, 1854.

⁹Erskine, "Diary," 36, 39-44. Erskine's diary is a most valuable chronicle of the trail. The editor hopes to follow the Bell diary with the publication of Erskine's as one parallels and supplements the other.

¹⁰Bell was born in Tennessee. In 1849 a brother, Edward C. Bell, left the settled home of the family at Knoxville and joined the gold rush to the West. His father, Samuel Bell, left Tennessee with his family in 1852, came down the Tennessee River to the Mississippi, thence to New Orleans and to old Indianola, on the Texas coast. He opened a jewelry store in San Antonio, which is said to have been the first in the State. In 1854 his son, James G. Bell, decided to go overland with James's trail herd and join his brother in California. He died in that State at the age of thirty-five. Ned C. Bell to J. Evetts Haley, October 11, 1931.

quence he set down his observations of the trip in diary form, and, as opportunity offered, sent them back to his relatives in the place of letters.

For many years I have been trailing down stray bits of history pertaining to the cattle industry of the Southwest. Sometime ago a fragmentary transcript of the Bell diary found its way into the Archives of the University of Texas. The remainder was thought to have been lost. In San Antonio a year ago, I was referred to Vinton and John James, a son and a grandson of the early pioneer, who told me that the original diaries were yet in existence, and were owned by Ned C. Bell, a nephew of the man who kept the journals. By a devious trail I found that Mr. Bell was living upon the small island of Aruba, in the Dutch West Indies, working with a large petroleum corporation. As a result of my correspondence with him he made available for publication this original chronicle of a little known trail. Through his kindness it is here given in print for the first time.

J. EVETTS HALEY,
Austin, Texas,
July, 1932.

A LOG OF THE TEXAS-CALIFORNIA CATTLE TRAIL, 1854

JAMES G. BELL

June 3 Left San Antonio at 9 O'clock P. M. rode 10 miles, encamped near some Mexican carts, in company with Mr. John James on our route to California. Lost my mule by carelessness, let every pararie traveler make the safety of his mule of the first importance.

June 4 Sunday Caught mule in the morning after an hours trouble — arrived at Castroville at 11 O'C A. M. Found Judge Heint, I. R. Sweet two other gents from the states, who had arrived night before; when crossing ford on the Modina, Sweet and companion drove into about 10 or 15 ft water — cause too much ice — left Castroville 4 O'C P. M. Arrived at camp near the Hondo in time for supper.

June 5 Monday. Left camp without anything occuring worth mentioning, arrived at the *Hondo*. Had *Blacksmithing* done. While waiting took a fine bath in the Hondo, beautiful clear water, and seemed to us thirsty and sun-burned travelers as cool as Ice. During the scorching days to come we will often look *back* to the Hondo as our lost *Mecca*. Made about 16 miles today and found fine herding ground. Here I had my first watch, as guard over cattle. Tried to catch some trout in the sluggish stream near by, but it was no go.

June 6 Tuesday. Heavy fog last night, cloudy this morning. Travelled about 9 miles, came up in front and found an hombre skinning 3 rattlesnakes. When I enquired the use he would put the skins to, he told me that by stretching the skin on the cantle of the saddle no harm would come to my posteriors IE no Gall[?] or sore; also by putting a peice of the skin between the lining and hat, that I never could have the headache. The hombre took the fat out of the snakes and divided with those who had faith in its virtues; it is good for wounds of various kinds. The Mexican gave me a very large snake skin when we arrived in camp, which was early, only nine miles to the next water hole; having time I stretched it tightly on the cantle covering it entirely, and used the end for covering the horn.

Evening, Killed a beef being in want of fresh meat, — it would

astonish a regular bred butcher to see with what dispatch 3 Mexicans can rope, kill, and have a beef cut into *ropes*. The beef is first thrown down by means of rope then stuck, not struck on the head. The head is turned to one side which holds the beef in the proper position, one side is skined, the skined side is allowed to turn up — half of the beef is dissected, the entrails then taken out, the ribs are left whole and roasted before the fire, the other half and head is made into ropes and exposed on a line in the sun until jerked. There is an old Comanche Indian in the train. He has all the peculiarities of his race, — light tread [?] high cheek bones, restless eye, and an eager desire to see blood. When the beef was being made into ropes he drew a 12 inch butcher knife and pitched in with an energy which told me plainly that the sight of blood was rather to his habit than otherwise.

June 7 Wednesday passed without anythin[g] worthy of record. The same routine of duty standing guard whilst the cattle were not travelling.

June 8 Thursday, passed as usual.

June 11 Sunday morning. We have been on the road one week; riding on a mule, with her easy swinging gate make[s] me verry drowsey, so that I can with difficulty keep my eyes open and am compelled to get a Mexican to ride her and I get in the ambulance. The scenery we have been passing through for the last few days has been surpassingly beautifull. I do not know to what range of mountains the small pyramid [?] like hills we pass every day belong. They are generally thrust up out of a large plane, and a minature simile is the blisters on a piece of pastry too hastily baked. At the foot of one of these hills is the Geone [Leona] Station.¹¹ There are about 150 men, parts of companies, and all the necessary houses, stables &c, the next station we pass is the Las Morass¹² and is beautifully situated on one of the clearest streams of water I have ever seen. We had a fine bath in cool waters. The ballance of the streams I have seen in this part of the state seem

¹¹This must have been Fort Inge, some eighty-five miles west of San Antonio, on the Leona, in Uvalde County. See thesis by Arrie Barrett, "Federal Military Posts in Texas, 1846-1861," p. 137, University of Texas, and Thomas H. S. Hamersley, *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States for One Hundred Years*, Washington, 1880, part II, 138.

¹²The post upon Las Moras Creek became Fort Clark. It was established June 20, 1852, as protection against the raids of Mexican and Indian bands upon the southwest frontier, as well as to give assurance to emigrants upon the California trail. Hamersley, as cited in note 11, part II, 128.

to be of a volcanic nature and are warm but the water when cooled is verry good, and resembles the Mississippi water.

12 Monday, I visited the Las Morass and found two young men of my acquaintance from San Antonio. The companies have two verry good gardens there, and the Gentleman — knowing how travelers on the plains suffer for want of vegetables — gave us some Cucumbers, beets, Parsnips, Lettuce, Parsley, &c. There were some Lipan Indians in camp begging for *carna* and seemed to be verry friendly. Their business at the station was to have a talk with some of the other tribes, to arrange some little matters of difference. They are miserably poor and only the shadow of their former g[r]eatness, but still endeavor to keep up appearances by painting their faces various colours. Both sexes dress so much alike that without one is accustomed to them, . . . it is difficult to distinguish the male from the female. We left camp about the usual time, travelled about ten miles — arrived at the Pedro Pinto, a verry pretty little stream, our cattle were somewhat restless during the night and came verry near stompeding twice.

13 Tuesday we came 8 miles to the Socata (muddy). The men are busy at various kinds of work, some repairing carts, some are brasing meat which has been half dried in the sun, some in groups conversing about the various topics that Interest them most. One man is engaged fastening a corn mill (to be used for coffee) to a piece of timber which can be tied to a cart wheel with a piece of raw hide rope — some are on guard, the day guard is composed of six men in each guard who stand two hours each, the night guard of the same number who stand 3 hours each — It requires considerable watchfulness as we are now considered in the Indian country. Encamped at the Zocata (muddy).¹³

14 Wednesday. Cloudy, slight drizzling rain, crossed the San Pedro, soil rather stony, count[r]y one undisturbed hill & vale, for a few miles thro' ground more stony than the other, the shrubery is covered with snails from 1/2 to 1 1/4 in long. We stoped about 3 O'Clock on the San Philippe. Attending herd I can see a range of low mountains by which runs the Rio Grande, distance 5 miles. An order has just been issued in camp that a gunshot is an alarm for Indians.

¹³*Zoque* is a Texas-Mexican colloquialism used by freighters and other border people to designate a mud hole. It should not be confused with the Spanish word for grass—*sacate*.

15 Thursday Cloudy. A short distance from camp the mirage presented to our view about 1 1/2 miles of the Rio Grande at this distance (5 mile — it seemed to be a noble broad river. I saw for the first time, in this state, the strawberry plant. It is in full blossom small and probably would not produce large fruit. Observed Pyritese of Iron in small particles, in the road. We are *now* in the mountain region. We crossed the Rio Diablo, Devils River — to day at 12 O'Clock. It is so called — from its rapidity when full — the ruggedness of the surrounding scenery — and probably from the advantages afforded to the Indians and murders committed. It empties into the Rio Grande; the water is very clear but of not great depth where we crossed. On one of the banks, which are of solid stone, and one to 150 perpendicular feet high (is a cave — two or three mouths called No. 1 [to note correction below] the painted cave) so called from some rough paintings — like on a Buffalow robe — in the inside. Probably this was a place of revelry. We are encamped two miles further on than the Rio Diablo — near a waterhole (No 1 The sentence . . . is an error; the cave is on the water hole) We have travelled 12 miles today. I learn from the guide that within the next ten days we will cross the Rio Diablo some 14 times. The soil here is poor and stony, would probably be fine country for sheep. We have no news of Indians in the Immediate vicinity — met part of Knox's train going down. Two of the men were wounded by hidden shots from the Indians some twenty days travel above.

We used for the first time today as part of our fuel, Buffalow — I. E — Ox chips. The boys roasted their sun cured meat on the chips with all the sang froid of Digger Indians.

16 Weather cloudy in the forenoon. One of the men disobeyed orders in leaving the Train to shoot at some game. Mr. James ordered his horse on and the poor fellow had to run a mile to catch up.

We passed the Palo Blanco Springs about noon. Arrived in camp at the California Springs six miles further. These springs derive their name from having been found and dug by some emigrants who were almost perished for water. We made to day about 18 miles.

17 Friday. Fine weather for travelling, found wild sage growing about 3 to 4 feet high. Passed 2 heaps of stones. 4 men were burried under one. Crossed Rio Diablo again, dangerous road,

fine timber in the bottom. Had a barbecued venison steak for supper; several Indian alarms. Camped 1/2 mile from rio diablo, poor soil, no grass, small mesquit except near the river. All had a bath which revived the men verry much after travelling over a difficult and stony road. Made 23 miles no water on the road.

Saturday. Cloudy. Men all around the fire looking on, and waiting with impatience for breakfast. Several sick men in camp but not dangerously so.

There are three men in camp I Mexican, 1 American and 1 German who are perfectly worthless and it would be a God send if the indians would kill them. Some of the men have verry little thrift, and take no care whatever of their health, have no thought for the next hour, and are content to let others do what thay should do themselves.

We have one poor fellow (German, or Pole) who seems to be deranged on the subject of honor, and immagins every one trying to insult him. He will probably be sent back, when we meet the San Antonio mail.

We find Grapes, Plums and walnuts in profusion. The Grapes are said to be fine when ripe. Walnuts are about the size of a large cherry when ripe and have a hard, smoothe shell.

The mountains on either side the canñons are small and irregular and seem to be rows of hills juttet into one another. We have crossed Rio Diablo seven times this morning, twice where it was dry, the water sinking, and when up running over the dry beds. The ground is entirely covered with cobble stones and is hard on the cattle's feet. Arrived in camp at 12 O'Clock. Two of us set to and collected parsley enough for greens for the whole party.

There is a fine spring in the neighbourhood, plenty of fish, but the worst of it is that *I* never catch anything — except fishermans luck.

Travelled ten miles today to camp. All the men except those whose are on duty are in bathing.

19 The greens are verry fair, not so good as some other kinds that are more frequently used, are gelatinous like okra. Have crossed Rio Diablo some 4 or 5 times to day, dry. Come to a Government post, do not know the name,¹⁴ went one mile further,

¹⁴This must have been a temporary army camp near the spot upon which Camp Hudson was located, June 7, 1857. It was eighty miles from Fort Clark, and two hundred miles west and a little north of San Antonio. Hamersly, as cited in note 11, part II, 138.

found no water and returned half a mile this side the post to camp.

Killed a beef this evening. Had a fine steak spitted and broiled.

The whole party are in doubt as to whether to day is Sunday or Monday. Went to the spring for water passed the Post and inquired the day of the week. Found it is Monday.

The men are busily engaged loafing about the camp, night is closing in, supper is getting ready and the hour is approaching for retiring to our apartments — around the ambulanche — for every one is compelled to retire early on account of the night duties. Come 13 miles today. Cloudy and slight drizzling rain in the forenoon, clear after.

20 Cloudy in the morning, clear & sunshine in the afternoon. Travelled none today waiting for the cattle to get in good travelling order, expecting to go 40 miles without water. Have had 2 baths to day in a waterhole near the post — washed 3 peices clothing. This is my third washing since I left home; find I am a first rate *washwoman*. The cattle are grazing on the side of a spur of the mountain, and have quite a picturesque appearance.

The soldiers at the Post draged the water hole to day and caught some splendid fish. We bought 2 Buffalow for 25 c each. They weighed about 12 or 15 pounds. I have never seen any fish half so fat. Our mouths are filling with water, in anticipation of the enjoyment at the supper — I had like to have said table — spread, for I can call it by no other name — it is an old dirty waggon cover sp[r]ead on the ground.

21 Having been in camp about two days, resting the cattle for a forty mile travel without water, we left camp about four o'clock traveled 12 miles to camp, found no water. Day passed off pleasantly. The night would have been equally so had it not have been that most of the men had only hours rest; — the noise of changing guard frequently keeps one awake.

22 Left camp about day light, filled our vessels with . . . water, which held one hundred gallons, passed a cross, made of two rough pieces wood tied across, to commemorate the death of some mexican.

We passed through a dog town; not verry extensive however. We did not see any of the inhabitants; when we get in to the country when thay are more plenty I will endeavor to give a description. Found about 10 barrels water scattered around in pockets. This gave the cattle a mouth washing each.

The men are anxiously awaiting dinner, for we have had comparatively little for two meals past, it being advisable, as not creating so much thirst as a full meal.

At 12 O'Clock divide the train. I was left with the waggon as an escort with 10 others, arrived in camp at 3 O'Clock in the morning, the cattle arrived some three hours earlier. I withstood the fatigue of about 20 hours on mule back — much better than I expected. Camp at Howards Springs.¹⁵ Travellers make this a resting place, consequently *some persons* are here all the time or nearly so.

Made 30 miles. This is a matter of necessity as there is not a particle of water on the rout of 30 miles.

23 In camp all day resting the cattle, during the night suspicious the presence of Indians, after examining, all became easy again.

24 In camp, expect to start at 3 o'clock. The cattle are in good order, the men are in fine humor for going about 15 miles. My health is good, good appetite and could eat a peck of fruit, vegetables, &c. Shall procure a quantity for the trip when I get to El Paso del Norte.

Left camp at 3 O'Clock made about 12 or 15 miles at 9 O'Clock without water, been traveling in Rio Diablo cañon for 10 days, got out this evening. Mountain scenery the same — entirely surrounded with broken mountains where if a man should get lost he should at once come to the conclusion to die with thirst or be killed by the Indians. The sunset this evening just as we got on the plain is such as I have never seen before; the whole heavens are one entire picture of their glory, or I might say the entire canopy is *one* sunset.

25 Left camp early. After about ten miles we entered the cañon again — previous to entering the cañon we passed thro' a large dog town, about four miles in circumference. The grass is cropped close, around the town; as we passed through a number of the inhabitants popped their heads just above the edge of the holes, bark a few times and disappear. Several were killed. When

¹⁵Judge O. W. Williams, pioneer West Texan and historian of the Fort Stockton country, recalls that this place was called "Howard's Well" in 1886, and was merely "a hole excavated about 12 feet deep, with a stone stairway leading to the bottom, where water was then being dipped up by bucket. I was told that this hole had been deepened more than once." O. W. Williams to J. Evetts Haley, November 27, 1931.

cooked their meat resembles squirrel meat; the claws are sharp, and always uncovered for the purpose of digging; the tail like a dog, hair between a Grey and Fox squirrel; the head resembles the Chewawah dog with his ears cropped, are about the size of a grown fox squirrel. The mountains on either side the cañon are not so irregular as those we passed a few days ago. Reach Live Oak Creek at 2 O'Clock and are encamped for the night. Made 17 miles. By the by, this is Sunday. No matter, it is all the same to us, we work as much on Sabbath as on week days. Not one half the men know how long we have been out.

There is a fall of six feet in Live Oak Creek, several of us are going bathing now — returning I found an oblong pile of stones. At one end found the inscription Amanda Lewis, 1852.¹⁶ I read . . . it aloud when one of the young men present spoke with astonishment. He was acquainted with the persons in Mississippi. She was a mother of a large family; How desolate must have been the husband and children when they performed the last sad rights over their loved mother, — when with mournfull feelings they turned away knowing that *then*, they beheld the last of her whom they had ever looked up to with love and veneration.

In this vast expanse of hill and plane when by mere chance I came upon this grave — a feeling of desolation and insignificance came over me, and I felt content in my ignorance of the wondrous creation of earth — the spot where this woman is buried, p[r]obably could not be found in one years search, for in 1852 this portion of Texas was outside of all civilization.

Night is now app[r]oaching and the serious business of the trip is about to comence — that of standing guard, and a possibility of an attack from the Indians.

The weather has been unusually fine to day and nature is smiling in all her beaoutous colors.

26 The sun is rising clear and grateful, for the morning air is a little too cool to be entirely comfortable.

Come seven miles to the crossing of the Pecos Rio,¹⁷ this stream

¹⁶In the log of distances, subsequently included in his diary, Bell speaks of a military post three and one-half miles from where the trail struck Live Oak Creek. While this approximates the location of old Fort Lancaster, it too must have been a temporary garrison, as this post was not formally established until August 20, 1855. Hamersley, as cited in note 11, part II, 140.

¹⁷Evidently the trail led almost due west from the military post to cross

is turbulent and rapid the color is a rich pink, went in bathing, found the deposit a very fine Emory. The banks are high and dangerous for cattle; depth from 5 to 10 feet.

Went 2 miles further than the Pecos and herded the cattle two hours.

Gathered some wild Plums, were verry good, made preserves of the green ones.

Left about sunset, traveled one mile to grass. Our cook got sick and I helped get supper, we live verry poor, cooking bad and verry little to cook. Some men who, when living in town appear to have a good deal of nobleness, are entirely different under different circumstances, a land speculator cannot be an honest man from the verry nature of his occupation.

27 Cloudy, and slight rain during the night. Morning cloudy, cool north wind blowing, prospect of a fine travelling day, will start late, on account of having lost some cattle at watering.

Travelled about 8 or 10 miles on the banks of the Pecos. Encamped early, killed a beef of which a considerable portion disappeared immediately; for the men were tired out on bacon. Several large rabbits were killed.

Five men, myself among the rest were sent to guard the ambulance during the night, were about 1 mile from the carts and cattle.

We will probably make El Paso earlier than two months, the cattle are in good order, and a better set of men — as regards the white men — could not have been gotten together. . . .¹⁸

The nice parts of the beef are cooked for supper, gut, Tongue, Brains, Liver &c.

28 Sun rose clear and warm, we — the men who guarded the Ambulance — disappeared about the time the sun appeared — under the water of the Rio Pecos. The bath was quite refreshing. Have not missed more than two days, without bathing, since I left San Antonio.

Yesterday we had no dinner, as a substitute I found the Mesquite Bean verry good. These Beans are six inches long, redish-grey

the Pecos a short distance south of the site of Sheffield, Texas. O. W. Williams, as cited in note 15.

¹⁸The editor deletes some remarks in regard to the Mexican race, which appear rather unjust. This is done both out of regard for that people and in consideration of Mr. Bell, who, in more mature judgment, would hardly have been so severe.

color when fit to eat, and the tast resembles that of the Honey Locust. The pod must be chewed, not the bean.

Travelled ten miles to camp, which is within two miles of Escondida.

29 Sun rising clear and warm, air cool and healthfull, there is a great difference in the air in confined towns, and in the open prairies. The morning air agrees with me verry well, or rather the sleeping in the night air does. I am not getting any stronger, but shall probably be much improved by the time I get through to California.

Yesterday my attention was called to a heap of stones which seemed to have been broken for macadamising purposes — had seen several similar heaps on different days previous — upon inquiry and examination, found a hollow in the centre two feet square and two deep with marks of fire on the stones. I can come to no other conclusion, but that these places were or are now used to offer up sacrifices in time of battle or at a death. The history of the Indians who inhabit this country, could not but be verry interesting, and an exploration geologically would no doubt develop inexhaustible mines of Gold, Silver, Copper, and Iron.

There seems to be a great scarcity of water at different points on the route. This I attribute to a want of search, for there *must* be in a mountainous count[r]y like this, thousands of springs which only want opening to afford an abundant supply.

We are encamped on the Rio Pecos for the last time — the third I believe — we leave about one O'Clock and am sure no one of the party will regret it in the least, for the water is verry muddy and filthy for drinking, & cooking, although it is only 400 miles from the head. The width is here about 20 yards, depth from 10 to 20 feet, current very rapid.

Travelled until dark and encamped without water, the night passed pleasantly, stood guard on the last watch.

30 Left camp half an hour after sunrise, made some 12 or 15 miles. At 12 O'Clock encamped on a water hole, the smell of which gave strong indications of Iron.

Have just washed my face — the first time in two days, forget when I combed my head last, about once a week is quite a luxury; am looking forward to our camping time this evening, with great impatience, for then — just think of it — I'll have a plunge into the water! and clean linnen! wont it be glorious; may take cold

from open[ing] the pores and clearing the dirt off the skin. If anyone could see the men together it could be sworn they were all millers — so dusty.

My hands and face and breast are a *beautifull* brown, something near a light mulatto color. The boys at home used to tell me, that if my skin were not so fair, I would readily be taken for a mulatto. I intend to school myself to bear the yoke of patience and meekness, for when I arrive in California it will be a Herculean task for me to attempt to fight every one who will call me *Boy!*

Seen more Horned Frogs today than before; I had a verry pretty little fellow to send Peg,¹⁹ but had no convenience of carrying, and lost it.

We made 10 miles to *Escondido Sp[r]ings*, I have had the *bath* and realized all I anticipated, in the way of pleasure.

I feel very well this evening, about as well as could be expected of a man who is on this trip for it is rough [?] and no mistake.

Today I drank some of the water at the last camping place, and found it to be exclent sulphur water, used it plentifully, believing it will be beneficial; the cattle also, enjoyed it.

Last night we had an alarm in camp. About 2 O'Clock in the morning the men were awakened up and told to get their horses, that the Indians were in the vicinity. After scouting for half an hour, the men returned and all became quiet again, I am under the impression that the alarm was false.

July 1st *Escondido Springs* (The Hidden Spring) The water these springs afford is cool and of verry good quality. Near the head is a small space of ground enclosed with large stone. The Guide tells me that four men, who were going to California, fortified themselves here and made a noble though unsucesfull defence against nearly a hundred Indians.

Have one Deer and some dozen Rabbits in the way of fresh meat.

I have been today again testing my qualifications as a wash-woman, washed 9 peices and thought it well done, only using cold hard water and hard soap.

Left camp at one O'Clock, travelled 15 miles through level prairie country with an occasional irregular, low and short range of mountains. The soil is gravel and lime, verry poor.

¹⁹Peg, the diarist's sister, became the late Mrs. Margaret Bell Newton, of San Antonio.

2 July Sunday. Made about 5 miles to the Comanche springs,²⁰ had dinner, water slightly brackish, had a bath. The bones of a man was found, the guide was acquainted with the man; on the knee cap & foot the muscels still remain, although it has been three years since he was killed, some of the clothing is laying about. The man was a notorious horse thief.

The water gives some slight indications of Sulphur. Last night a pretty stiff southern wind was blowing, which made guard duty rather uncomfortable; it continues today, but the clear sky and warm sun makes it fine travelling weather. The road forks about 1/4 mile ahead and leads to Placideo del Norte. I can see the deep blue cloud like mountains in the direction of Placideo²¹ and about 20 miles distant.

Left camp at noon made 10 miles to Leone Springs.²² There are several small lakes. One has been sounded and no bottom found, the depth gives the water a beautiful blue color, slightly brackish; around the water the ground is lightly frosted with salt, the grass is here a rich green color, the cattle eat very little, on account of its salty tast.

There is a cattle train about five miles in advance of us, belonging to Franklin and Dean.²³ The only sign we had of their presence was the clouds of dust; when we arrived at the Springs one of the owners came in to camp on a visit.

We are fairly on the plains again, mountains are only seen on the Mexican side at a distance of forty miles.

We are now on the second bench or steppe of the high mountains. Vegetation is not so far advanced as one hundred miles back.

Those who have travelled this rout befor, say . . . there is no deer; but we find the antelope in small droves. There is still a

²⁰Fort Stockton was located at these wonderful springs, March 23, 1859. Hamersly, as cited in note 11, part II, 154.

²¹Evidently the author meant Presidio del Norte.

²²The Leon Springs or Water Holes were about ten miles west of Fort Stockton. They consisted of three circular ponds, fringed with tules and other water plants. One hole drained into another and the last into a marsh approximately a mile long. This marsh was once the home of thousands of wild ducks. Erosion, following the advent of the whites, has obliterated these once famous, so-called "bottomless" holes. O. W. Williams to J. Evetts Haley, July 24, 1930.

²³Franklin and Dean drove their herd from Bastrop County. *Texas State Gazette*, July 29, 1854.

cool southern wind blowing, it is what is called a dry wind, chaps the face and hands verry much.

3 Monday Have a good prospect of a fine day, cool pleasant breze. We are encamped 1/2 a mile from water. Some of the men are engaged in collecting wood, at our next camp there is none, most of the wood in this country is small mezquit, not over 4 feet high. The dead parts are used for fire and burn well.

We will in a few days commence the "one hundred miles" without water, then is the time when the men and cattle will be sorely tried.

The crow is scarce here, the Raven and Mexican Buzzard fill up the compliment, of the feathered tribe, with the exception of a few small birds. We see the Turkey occasionally, but at this season they [are] unfit to eat.

There is a confounded Locust near me on a bush buzng away, so that I can scarcely have the patience to write.

The sound is more metalic like, than the Locust in in [sic] Tennessee, and creates an unpleasant buzng in the ear, like the rushing of blood to the head.

Probably you would like to have some idea of my manner of sleeping, personal appearance &c. — I find the blue coat to be perfectly superfluous and generally carry it tied behind the saddle, pants in my boots, both boots and pants begin to have rather a shocking bad appearance for after eating (having left my handkerchiefs at home — I use the pants for wiping my knife & hands on; in riding the bosom of my check shirt works open, and along down the center of my breast is a brown stripe like the stripe on a black Duchmans back. My nose and ears and neck are undergoing the scaling proseses untill I look as scaly about the face and gills as a buffalow fish. My riding outfit consists of — on either side of the horn is a *rope* and canteen, behind the cantle is my tin cup and iron spoon, while occasionally there is to be found a dead rabbit hung by the neck waiting to be devoured. And when we expect to travel over dinner time, a slab of jerked beef finds itself flaping against the side of the mule.

My bed is made with the over and Indian rubber coat next the ground, saddle at the head, horse blanket on the saddle to make it soft, bed blanket over all, and myself on top of that; sometimes to luxuriate a little I pull off my boots and hat. When it rains I roll up into a ball like a porcupine, and spread the gum coat over me.

I like to sleep in the open air, for when I get up in the morning my sleep has been refreshing and comfortable.

Left camp at 1 O'Clock. The mountain scenery continues the same; passed through a portion of the plain which was covered with, what I think is Pyrites of Iron. A few miles further on we came in sight of what seemed to be a miniature forest. When we arrived at it, it was a large dog town, with a species of cactus growing — which looked like ears of corn placed end on end in zigzag directions and from 3 to 5 feet high — which gave it the appearance of a miniature forest.²⁴

Made 15 miles to camp at 9 O'Clock. Went to bed without supper, stood guard 3 1/2 hours — from 1/2 passed 11 to —.

July 4th 1854 There is probably not one American in camp, who does not remember to-day with different feelings from those of other days. We have no means of celebrating this day except by recollection of the past celebrations, that we have witnessed in our youthfull days. The mind will naturally go back 78 years, and look with pride and veneration upon the deed which created a nation.

The portrait of Benjamin Franklin came particularly to my mind, and, I could almost see his kind, fatherly and philosophical looking face as he stood in Congress hall at the signing of the declaration.

Left camp one O'Clock traveled 9 1/2 miles to water in a small cañon which was difficult of access, arrived about 4 O'Clock; late in the evening Smith from El Paso with six wagons came into camp; found Kyle of San Antonio going down as passenger.

5th Left camp at six this morning, crossed the dry bed of the Limpia, made 9 miles to water, Franklin & Dean are encamped here. We will remain 3 days recruiting for a long drive without water.

The mountains here are generally of a solid black, iron-looking-stone, perpendicular precipices from 100 to 200 feet high are frowning around and almost over us. The bed of the Limpia and in fact for twenty miles back, afford a great variety of stones. Some are very pretty [and] generally belong to the species of *garnet*. I have commenced a collection of the different colors, and by the time we arrive at El Paso will have a very pretty little collection. This morning found a beautiful piece of watered cornelian; lost it

²⁴This must have been the vicious *cholla* or "walking stick" cactus.

again in rooting a rattle snake out of his hole. He could not get all in on account of a great bunch about the middle of his body. I cut the *gent* open and disclosed a small owl, such as go into the nest of the Prairie Dog.

We have a good prospect of rain this evening, and when it does commence, we expect a young Mississippi, for during a hard rain these cañons are roaring with water and it seems impossible they should ever be dry.

Smith reports a fight some 40 miles ahead — Mr Erskin had with the Indians — they stole 3 head oxen. Erskin retaliated by killing 6 Indians and taking 10 horses. he was foolish to follow them into a cañon where with additional forces the Indians turned on him and compelled him to retreat.²⁵ If the Yellow bellies should attack us doubtless they would have a warm reception. All the men are well armed. The only thing lacking is more horses.

By the by, on the fourth I eat a peice of prairie dog. They are better than the Jackass rabbitt, the name might not suit some, but I don't mind such little things.

Killed a beef, cut some steaks from the forequarter; as beef does not eat well when fresh killed, will save some until tomorrow.

Some of the men brought a Muscal plant into camp and are making preparations for cooking it. I eat too much beef and slept restless, was awakened by the captain of the guard at 1/2 past 3 to stand untill seven. The morning watch is very, very pleasant. I regret exceedingly that there is no Thermometer in camp, the air here is unsurpassed, I imagine, in any country, cool breze blowing continually. There are more than 1000 head of cattle and horses in the cañon and I cannot see over 1/2 a dozen. Such is the deceptiveness of these *pockets*, I might say, it appears to be but

²⁵Michael Erskine left his ranch on the Guadalupe, near Seguin, April 24, 1854. Realizing the danger from Indians, he paid Captain James H. Calahan \$1500 to escort his herd to California. Calahan had 35 men, only twelve of those were under way. The others were working their way to California. A. J. Sowell, *Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of Southwest Texas*, 683-684.

Major Erskine's diary of June 29 records the loss of 3 work steers. He discovered that two Indians had driven them off. Calahan, with 13 men, took their trail through the high peaks and "narrow passes" of the Davis Mountains to where 50 Mescaleros were camped. Calahan and his men "charged upon them [and] scatered them to the sides of the Mountains where they took shelter among the rocks. They fought them for about an hour; think they wounded and perhaps killed some. Came off unhurt and brought with them 8 horses, 2 mules and Jack and Jinney. . . . I purchased 9 of the animals at \$300—payable in California. Calahan kept one by the consent of the company." "Diary," 55.

1/4 mile to the base of the mountains. Let any one undertake to walk it — as some of our men did this evening, and 2 miles wont reach the base.

6th Thursday, is a fine day and no mistake. Had one of the salted steaks, it is much improved by age and salt.

Took the Muscal plant out of the pit this morning. There is nothing unpleasant about the tast. I dont like it. An epicure might call it delicious; cannot describe the flavour because I have eat nothing like it. It is the root of the plant, has husks like the Pine Apple only much large[r] probably 1/2 a pound, and is filled with a fibrous gelatinous matter. The whole tube will weight from 6 to 9 pounds. The Indians of this portion of Texas derive their name from this plant. It is their principal food.

Started to the top of the mountain this morning, [but] did not get up, owing to the great distance and fatigue. The appearance of the intervening ground from camp to the top seems tolerably regular, but when we passed over the ground found large ravines, each one of which was a considerabel job to cross; — We rolled a few stones into the cañon below then returned in time for dinner. I suppose we walked ten miles going and returning; found a seep, opened it out, had good water.

In the evening, went into a cañon to bath, not much water, but verry cool and pleasant to the skin.

Passed the evening in camp performing some personal duties, sewing on buttons, repairing &c. There is a Baptist Minister in the other camp. He promises to give us a sermon at the first opportunity.

7 Friday we make a start to go through the *Wild Rose Pass* — the *Majordomo*, of the Mexicans tells me that *Puerto del Mustanga Rosa* is the Mexican interpretation of *Wild rose pass*. I am satisfied this is not correct. This man from his place ought to be the most inteligent man in their party. The poor ignorant fellow cannot tell the meaning of the simplest word; so far as I have seen of the Mexicans thay are miserably ignorant, just one grade above the Indians.

This pass is considered the most dangerous on the rout, unfortunately we got behind Franklin & Dean, and were nearly the whole day in making ten miles. It is a wild country, and ten Indians could give a large party great trouble. The *Wild Rose*

grows here in great profusion, from whence the name, this is not the proper season, it is as yet too cool, in this altitude.

Separated at the head of the cañon, their being two roads to the head of the Limpia; at the head of the cañon found good water and grass.

None but a poet could appreciate this evening; the rising moon, the setting sun, the calm sensation, the clear sky and smooth verdant prairie gives, all combine to make it the most pleasant and delightful camp we have had during the trip.

The low mountains which surround us are just far enough to keep the eye from waring with the desert wast, while the rich coloring of the sky, combined with the whole landscape make any one who has "music in the soul" wish to be a Painter, and any Painter wish for the power to copy it.

Around us are thousands of Dogs who singly appear, give a few barks and slip into their underground houses.

8 Saturday. The sun comes up clear this morning, will be comfortable day, breze blowing, three men are gone out ahead to find water so, if possible to cut off a portion of the "hundred mile" stretch. We will encamp here during the day, ten mules and horses are kept under saddle all the time to be ready for the redskins. Some of the men are engaged digging out Dogs.

Mr James and myself went to a point on the mountain to watch for a signal within one hour to sun set; passed over 2 1/2 miles to gain the point. About the time stated a light smoke assended from a mountain twenty miles distant. This was the signal for water. We answered by a similar smoke, so the men could tell at what time we would start and arrive.

Looking down upon the plain small circular blazes, could be distinctly seen, and verry numerous. This was caused by the little mounds thrown up by the Dogs, for hundreds of acres [of] these blazes could be seen; on the places where there is no grass, small pits — large as a dollar — cover the ground. Almost certainly, my ideas induce me to believe, these are caused by Dogs digging out the roots of grass &c.

July 9 Sunday again, left camp early, travelled about 4 miles to grass & water, fine day, sunshine and pleasant breze. Will leave after dinner. 23 miles to camp. The night air is verry cool, an extra blanket would not be amiss.

We have not had the promised sermon, from the Rev Gentleman,

spoken of a few pages back, — Well we are not particularly in need of spiritual food, but I could sit down and listen with patience to the greatest *ass* who had ever been *called*.

Started to go short distance for water 3 miles, found none, encamped all night. I had 4 hours guard in the evening, 3 hours at midnight, did not go to bed any more but made preparations for starting.

10th Left camp 1 hour before day. Prospect of fair day.

The mountains here are composed almost entirely of stone. Soil sandy and unfit for cultivation. Noticed particularly 2 immense stones probably 150 feet in circumference and 20 feet above ground. What noble monuments to place equestrian statues of our great warriors! — if only in the p[r]oper place. There is quite a natural fire place near the bottom of one of these stone[s]; it looks as if some travelers had used it for cooking in.

A gentleman in our party pointed out the Potatoe Plant. I had not observed it before it was in blossom, did not examine the root, for want of time.

We found muddy pools of water occasionally during the day, had to lead my mule half a mile through the — “Devil’s foot path” I call it, to water. Made camp about sundown; a *Black tailed Deer* was brought into camp; something new to me; This deer is much larger than the usual deer, — darker, end of the tail black, also a spot in the forehead, the ears are much longer, will have some for supper.

I must here say that most of this journal was written in the hurry and bustle of arrival or departure in or from camp, and must necessarily be imperfect.

We will probably commence our 80 mile trip tonight, have indifferent water here. We may get through in 3 days.

11 Found water earlier than we expected. Arrived in camp about 10 O’Clock; the water was at the head of a cañon one mile from the mouth. Were from 10 O’Clock untill dark watering the cattle. It was tiresome business indeed; but sound sleep and good appetite came from it. In the evening had a prospect of a rain. The smell of the air combined with thunder, while we were up in the mountain made every one hope that the rain was not far distant, but we were doomed to disappointment; these mountain signs all fail so far as rain is concerned.

12 Day opens fairly, we commence watering the cattle directly,

left camp about 7 O'Clock, travelled till two on the 13th. 16 men were sent forward myself among the rest. We took about 550 head of cattle designing to go immediately on to the Rio Grande, water being scarce trains are obliged to push forward.

13 Thursday 12 O'Clock We had first meal, being with out food, — except dry bread — some 18 hours; when we examined the provisions, found everything contrary to what was ordered. The cooks previous to leaving our carts behind did not prepare any coffee, bread, salt, pepper; you may guess the cooks would have been in a bad way had they been with us.

I have had very little sleep in the last few days and expect to have about $\frac{1}{2}$ as much untill Saturday morning at 2 O'Clock. We will travel steadily untill then. At that time we will behold the Rio Grande the first running stream for some weeks.

Mother look at these leaves how dirty, and you can imagine how *dirty* my hands are. I expect to get on some clean clothes in a few days also to have the luxury of washing my face and hands. Water can be appreciated in this country. Leave camp at 3 O'Clock.

Traveled all night, lost some stock, one ox fought the drivers, although he was not able to travel, it [was] truly dangerous to urge him forward; driving cattle when they are almost perishing for water looks like punishing the animals for amusement, but they are compelled to [go] forward or die.

14 Friday, we have to make 33 miles from Eagle Springs — our last camping place — and by the way which is as filthy water as could be honored with the name of spring. The name induces the traveler to look forward expecting to find a noble gushing stream of at least respectable water, when he arrives he is doomed to disappointment for instead of quenching the thirst it increases it.

The mail from San Antonio came in about 10 O'Clock. Saw Capt S Eilman [?] and several other acquaintances, learned that nothing of interest had occurred in San Antonio. I expected to receive some way mail, but was disappointed. I certainly shall not be so again, cause why, I will not expect anything.

There is a government station here, probably some 40 or 50 men, we met a party from this place, scouting about 40 miles back, Indian rumors are as frequent as ever. I would better able to believe them, could I see a few Indians occasionally.

Mr James arrived in camp, — 3 hours ahead of the carts. He

seemed verry cool when informed of the loss of 75 head of cattle the night before, the cause was the guard went to sleep, and the cattle broke for the nearest water, instinct learns them where it is, and when verry thirsty they can smell water 5 miles. Left camp at 4 O'Clock travelled all night, had a verry hard time; being divided all the men had to drive, and driving is something more than merely urging the animals forward.

Arrived in camp, or rather near the Rio Grande at day break. The last part of the train came in 3 hours after, lost some animals during the night, some dying and some st[r]aying off for water. The majority of dead cattle are nearest the river.

It is now near 4 O'Clock Saturday and I have had a piece of corn bread as big as my fist with 1/2 cup of cold coffee, and half gallon water with two drinks of *good Brandy*. This is the extent of my eating in 24 hours, well we shall see what we shall see, *Poco Tiempo*.²⁶

15 Saturday, this would be a very pleasant day, but for the immense quantity of decaying animal matter which covers the ground — the smell of which counteracts the pleasing sensation of the cool breze from the south.

At sundown, I am going down to the *Rio Grande del Norte* to take a bath, not to take the dirt off, but to get the fever out of my system caused from exhaustion.

The river . . . at this season of the year is very full, 50 yards wide, rapid, deep and turbulent, the banks indicate continual washing in; the dry season the water scarcely runs. This I will not swear to, the old travellers on this rout say so. The other bank is the *great* (?) state of Mexico.

Had a severe headache during the evening, stood my guard tho' and found the exercise beneficial, when went to bed felt verry well, and slept soundly 'till morning. Put a pan full of water to subside and get cool in the night — found it excelent water.

²⁶Ersine, who reached the Rio Grande a week earlier, was more fortunate than James. After leaving fifteen head at Van Horn's Wells and Eagle Springs, to be watered by hand and brought in later, he wrote in his diary that if these cattle come in safely "we will have accomplished what no other man has done. Traveled 100 miles in 3 days with a drove of cattle of 875 head and not loose one, either in driving or Watering at the River. All other drovers have lost some." Ersine, "Diary," 57-58.

Sowell, in detailing Calahan's memoirs, recorded that when the herd was near the Rio Grande "Four head became violently insane and escaped to the mountains," and that another was lost when "He swam the river and went into Mexico." Sowell, as cited in note 25, 685.

[July] 16th Sunday. I did not know this was the Sabbath untill my alminack gave the information.

Discharged 3 Mexicans this morning 2 that slept on guard a few nights since and lost seventy five head of cattle. The other came in complained of guard duty, was impudent, and was started without anything to eat. The other two were furnished with enough to last to El Paso, 80 miles distant.

Some hunters from the other camp brought in the largest white tailed deer I have ever seen; he was very old and so confounded tough, that a square inch would have been sufficient for breakfast, dinner and supper. I commenced on a mouthfull, found it was no go but thought perserverance would master it as I had been told that perserverance would conquer anything, and I am able to say that, if no one else has, I have found an exception to the rule. If Goodyear and Day could see a piece of this venison they would immediately discover a new article to add to their great quantity of manufactures; that is *India Rubber* meat for prairie travellers, and recommend it as being more easily masticated as well as more economical. I tried to jerk some of the confounded stuff, in the Indian fashion, but the flies were so bad, was compelled to give it over; smoke and fire would not keep them off.

I could now enjoy the comfort of a home with great *Gusto*.

Have been reviewing this diary, and am almost induced to destroy it. From El Paso to California I will write a better one, or none at all. Will move camp this evening, been here near the water to let the cattle fill up and get the fever out of their systems. We now move to grass.

Franklin and Dean are here without anything to eat, we divided what little we had. The remainder will be used up by tomorrow noon. Then if our waggons do not arrive, we shall be in a bad way.

Two of the best venison were brought into camp this evening I have ever eaten of. I laid hold of one tender loin spitted it and had the supper of all suppers.

17th This morning our carts, some of the men and 50 head of cattle arrived from Eagle Springs. They came in verry opportunly, for we were entirely out of every thing to eat except the venison; the men report the probable loss of several men who went out in search of cattle. Mr. James with about 15 men still remain behind, hunting for cattle.

This evening a hot south wind commenced blowing, with slight indications of rain. Toward night the wind blew furiously with prospect of hard rain storm; at I O'Clock the wind changed from south to north and became cool. The darkness was verry great so much so that we could not distinguish a steer at a distance of ten feet. This made it hard and disagreeable work for those who were on duty.

18 This morning I became confoundedly sleepy. I attributed it to drinking too much coffee. Quit it when I found myself at it, but gradually get into the habit again.

At breakfast had some venison steak off the tough old buck, mentioned a few pages back. It was in fine *French* order for cooking just enough of the *gone* flavour about it to induce me to believe that if I did not make it go one way it would another, so I eat it; if you had a peice you would not think I am a poor cook, — fried out some bacon, cooked the venison, then got some sea biscuit and pounded them. These I thickened the gravy with — then with a cup of coffee some corn bread the steak, sitting on the ground, with all the ease and carlessness of camp, — I sit down and would have shamed *Mortimer*, the book man — by the quantity I eat. But enough of eating, as that is one of my faults. I ought not to mention it.

One of the Mexicans whom we discharged two days ago, — came into camp this morning, beging for something to eat. The poor devil was out all night in the storm. We gave him something to eat with a warning to not return or loaf about camp, under penalty of being whipped out.

The air is cool and pleasant this morning, with a prospect of a fine day. The Rio Grande is still rising, it washed the dam from the mouth of the little well I dug for the purpose of settling and cooling water, and disappointed me in a good drink.

The Mexicans, at breakfast were discussing whether thay would be considered white people, or not, in California. One settled the discussion by saying thay would be considered negros and whistled about, called Jack! as is the custom among the Southern States.

19 Mr. James, a few of the men and some of the cattle came in this morning, still encamped at the place where we first struck the Rio Grande.

Three men left returned to Eagle Springs this evening to join

those who are behind. They intend to scout for some six days. We leave in a few hours to travel six miles up the river.

20 Left camp early, made six or eight miles to camp, passed a portion of the day in lounging about, eat some — what the mexicans call — Mexican strawberry, these are nothing more than a speices of *Prickly Pear*; the inside of the pear resembles the strawberry, it is the most delicious of the speices I have tasted. Last night I was kept from sleep by the Musquito, thay annoyed and bit me beyond all patience.

July 21 Friday. We will remain here all day. One of our men brought in a Buffalo Fish, which he shot in the back water of the Rio Grande. He reports any quantity, the men in the other party killed four or five. I have not examined any yet, to see whether thay contain an unhealthy quantity of fat.

Killed a beef this morning, cant say *he* contains any surplus fat. I think he would hardly pass *even* in the San Antonio market.

22 Saturday. Left camp at seven O'Clock. On the road I gathered some fine Pears. I am falling in love with this fruit, it is generally condemned by those who travel this road, and said to be unhealthy. I am under the impression that those who refuse to eat it, were never used to any kind of fruit or vegetables and have been brought up on bacon, coffee, Corn Bread.

We have come ten miles, will stop for two hours. Mother I had a cup of Tea a few days ago! What do you think of that? It is the first since I left San Antonio.

Went to the river to water my mule. Killed an animal that somewhat resembled a medium sized rat. It had very long and fine fur, tail twice as long as the body, mouth and teeth like a squirrel, only nearer the throat a pocket on each side the mouth lined in the inside with fur, — this I suppose is to carry the young in, and what is most remarkable is the hind legs are about 3 times the length of the fore ones, giving it the appearance of a Kangaroo; in fact by some in camp it is called the Kangaroo Rat; — I skined it on account of its oddity and beautiful fur. the little fellow was very fat and would no doubt been verry good to eat.

Made seven or eight miles to camp on the bank of the *Rio Grande*; encamped there, were two waggons and one ambulance. This party is a portion of one who left Eastern Texas, for the purpose of mining near El Paso. Thay divided there, some going to California, the ballance returning home by this rout. During the

night a Mexican robbed the owner of two hundred dollars. This he did by breaking open his chest.

I last night caught one man asleep on guard, reported him and had his pistoles taken away while asleep; poor fellow, I hated to inform on him, but necessity required it.

Had a pretty comfortable sleep last night, a slight wind blowing, kept off the musquitoes.

July 23 Sunday. The morning fairly, and gives a small indication of what it will be about noon — as hot as forty. Stopped a short time on the way and let the cattle and horses eat the mesquit bean of which they eat with grediness. Occasionally on the road — that is several times a day — we find groves of these beans.

At noon we encamped opposite a Mexican town or *rancho*. About one dozen men came over, bringing new onions, as large as my fist, eggs, chickens, and Muscal liquor; we bought everything except the liquor which they would not sell, but gave to us. This Liquor has a tast between whiskey and brandy, and considerable intoxicating power. Not one of these men have on pantaloons; but a few have white cotton drawers about I yard wide at the bottom, some have on a cotton shirt, just long enough to be decent, some have simply a cloth around the wast. They seem to be a happy race and dont care a fig for the superfleuties of life; corn is here worth one dollar pr bushel. These mexicans present several different colors of skin —, the different grades between the castilian and Indian; *Our* Mexicans are enjoying themselves in social converse with the others, relating the news, gossip, the rumors picked up along the road.

Had 4 different dishes of onion, to day for dinner; — raw onion with vinager, salt & pepper; fried onions; onions, meat, and egg in one dish; and beef soup seasoned with onions; After you read this I suppose you will say Onions! Onions!! Onions!!! In boiling the Eggs, I forgot them in my indulgence of the other good things, and boiled them as hard as stone. Paid 25 cents pr doz for eggs, and about at the rate of one dollar per bushel for onions.

Made two miles to camp, where we found good grass. The Mexican town we left is San Ignacio. The men were verry anxious to encamp near the town, so as to go to the fandango at night, one Mexican was verry particular to dress in his best suit — fancy pants, red flanel over shirt, and the regular mexican hat, the material of which is like the old fashioned fire bucket, and nearly

as heavy, it astonishes me how they can bear the enormous weight on the head; the crown part is too small for any head except a small boy. This together with the enormous head of hair which they wear would make it unbearable for any one except a Mexican.

24 Monday, left camp early with a prospect of a fine, but warm day — Made ten miles to camp, — for dinner — which is on the old channel of the Rio Grande. Have had very good water for a few days past — from the lagoons of the Rio. This when cool is as good as the best cistern water. My canteen is worth five dollars to me, the only thing to regret is that it keeps the[water] so cool, that everyone runs to me for a drink, consequently when I want a drink my canteen is out.

24 [sic] To day passed a rancho on the opposite side. The country here begins to give some evidence of civilization. Occasionally we pass a corn field, which is without any fencing the crop seems to be very backward and not near so far advanced as at San Antonio. About ten O'Clock in the morning we came to the small town of San Elizario. I should have mentioned, that we arrived in a small town about day light, a few miles back of San Elizario, there we bought some apples from off the trees. They would be considered worse than common in a regular apple country but here — half green as they are — I eat about one dozen with great *gusto*.

I did not inquire to what Saint this town is dedicated to but, I imagine it ought to be Saint Diablo; for I honestly believe his Majesty had a hand in laying it out, it was with difficulty we could get through, owing to the crookedness of the streets the mud puddles and hills; we finally got through however, and I suppose not one of our men but what left with a curse and blessing on his lips; a curse because we got into it, and a blessing because we got out. One of the men was sent ahead with the ambulance and I went along; during the day we lost our way twice, and one time in crossing the old bed of the *Rio Grande* our lead mules were swimming. We came very near turning the Ambulance over in deep water, and it was only by mere accident I did not get a good ducking. The soil around these settlements is of a good quality; light, sandy, and river bottom; it is watered entirely by irrigation; water melons and musk melons are now ripe, have had some few grapes, although generally, they will not be ripe for about two weeks. Apples and Pears will be full ripe in a short time; we have good green corn for dinner every day, upon inquiry, I learn the

corn is about the last crop planted here, this is the reason why it appears so backward.

I have upon invitation, taken up my lodging with Dr. Giddings at a Mexican house; we have the food cooked up in mexican style, that is onions and peper mixed with everything, after living on camp diet for nearly two months, this food agrees with me very well.

The houses in this country are built entirely of adobes, with the cement roofs. The confounded people have never learnt the art of ventilation, but seem to make their houses as air tight as possible; only having enough openings for light and entrance; the room where I am now writing has a window and door on one side and these open on a court where the evening and noon sun shines with all its power, the houses are generally built in the form of a hollow square.

Wheat yields a good crop and mills in the vicinity make as fine flour as could be desired. Geo Craig has a threshing machine running, but it dose not work well, the wheat is not bearded and it has to be run through twice to get all the grain out.

I learn that, there are immense vineyards on the Mexican side which [yield] a large revenue to the owners. This country is destined at some day to become of importance to the United States. There is no wholesale trades carried on between the two countries at this point, — cause why — the tarrif amounts almost to prohibition.

I will continue my Journal when we leave this place and can probably find items of greater interest.

Closed at Franklin or Smith Rancho,
Opposite El Paso July 31st 1854

James G. Bell.

2d August 1854 Left Franklin to-day at four O'Clock, after remaining about one week. Had a splendid rain. The first one since we left San Antonio. The clouds hand low around the tops of the mountains and seem to be within gun shot. These mountains abound in silver, and within the vicinity several mines are in the different processes of opening and working; one mine known as the Step[h]enson mine yields abundantly and has lately been disposed of to a company — some of whom are members of Congress — for Thirty thousand dollars; Franklin has also

been purchased for about the same amount and by the same company; this induces me to believe the Pacific Railroad bill is not far from its passage. Near El Paso is supposed to be the crossing point.

4th Left camp at sunrise. The day bids fair to be a pleasant one. It is now raining on the mountain tops, which are entirely covered with clouds; — grazing the cattle in the valley.

Made fifteen miles to camp near Fort Fillmore, raining hard all morning, had dinner — pretty rough, after living on town fare for a week. Will soon get used to it however, dont care how rough, so that I get to California soon.

The features of James Company are considerably changed, some men have been discharged and some new ones received; I can hardly tell whether the change has made any improvement; it is very difficult to collect any body of men together, without having some black sheep in the flock.

Cool wind blowing and sun shining. Had a bath just before supper, while bathing a sharp little rain came up and we had just time to get our clothing under shelter.

5th Saturday. Prospect of a fine day, leave camp early. Will pass fort Fillmore in one mile and a half. Fillmore is quite a large post, four companies are stationed here. This post is in New Mexico.²⁷ We are encamped within a few miles of *Las Cruces* (The Crosses). I learn from the government transcript of the rout, that it is 885 miles from Ft. Fillmore to San Diego, this makes the rout some shorter than when I heard it on the road. We will probably make [it] in two and a half months.

6th Sunday — Hot day, particularly when on guard. Soil th[r]ough this valley is not generally of a good character, neither is grass plenty, but the grama grass is to be found at good distances for camping; the Mezquit Bean grows here in great profusion.

Along the road from Franklin are numerous settlements. We passed through one little place honored with the name of [sic] and contains some six or eight houses. In looking over the rout I find several ranchos and Indian vilages scattered along the

²⁷Fort Fillmore, on the east bank of the Rio Grande forty miles above El Paso, was established September 23, 1851, and was abandoned shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War. Hamersley, *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States for One Hundred Years*, Part II, 133.

way. There is no fruit to be had in this vicinity, so I am told; if there is any I am bound to find it.

7th Monday. Waiting in camp untill all the men come in. They are all visiting the different ranches and settlements near by; spreeing &c, the consequences of being a long time out of the settlements; it is dull life in camp.

Camp life brings out all the utility men have — for instance I took an old worn out pair of pants, and threw them up in a tree. Shortly I saw one of the men cutting them into sections of a circle, to make a scull cap of — who would have thought that the pants I started from San Antonio with would have been used on a mans head the ballance of the trip.

There is a general splitting up of Franklin & Dean's Camp at this point; the Parson who promised some time since to give us a sermon, is of one party; he concluded that we were too far gone in sin; for his preaching to do us any good; and we have not had the sermon. There is a rumor in camp that some party ahead murdered two Indian women; that the Indians are preparing to attack every party who pass; they are of the Apache tribe and the only ones to be feared.

8th Tuesday — tried to leave camp early, but could not, owing to one of the cartmen who wanted to leave, and return to San Antonio; we got off however about 8 O'Clock; two miles brought us to the town of Las Crusas. Six miles further we came to Don Anña the largest town on this side we have passed through; these towns have sp[r]ung up since Gadsten treaty has been under the consideration of Congress.

The valley through which we passed to-day and yesterday evening, begins to show considerable signs of cultivation; — we bought some verry fine watermelons. Corn is backward — the law sustains planters who have corn destroyed by cattle or otherwise, the fields are not fenced in, and such swearing, cracking of whips and racing as we have when passing with a corn field on each side, makes it amusing, and does away with some of the dulness of trip. The mountains on either side the valley are destitute of trees but are covered with grass.

Not being acquainted with the language, I cannot learn how the people of this state — New Mexico — are satisfied with the laws; they seem to be content and prosperous.

Passed the Santa Fee mail, thay travel without an escort. We are fairly on the road again; Don Anña is the last town of any size through which we pass, untill we get near California. The men are all anxious to push forward, and get through as soon as possible.

The confounded Musquitoes had like to have eat us up last night. The only way in which we could drive them off, was to build small fires around the camp; we used for fuel dried ox chips. I[t] strikes me that these same chips would make an excellent substitute for Hickory wood for smoking meat; when dry thay are verry light and are in fact nothing but dried grass; the smell of the smoke is not offensive and comes nearer the Hickory smell than any wood I know of.

Had a splendid night for herding, a clear full moon, cloudless sky, except a few heavy clouds that skirted the southern horizon, which emitted brilliant zigzag flashes of lightning and strongly developed the mountain outline. While on guard I enjoyed it exceedingly well, but when I retired, the Musquitoes annoyed me so, that it was like throwing cold water on a man when he is trying to induce a perspiration.

9th Wednesday. Clear and warm.

We will remain in camp during the day, waiting to complete arrangements in full for the trip, day passed off as usual. About eleven O'Clock at night some of the men visited a watermelon field about two miles distant, and *appropriated* ? ten or fifteen melons, a bushel of green corn, and a bushel of onions. We expected the sheriff after us, so we hid the pigings in a cart, and looked as honest [as] honesty itself; I think we will try the edibles to-morrow.

10th Thursday. Cloudy, and cool in the morning; warm and clear at noon, still in the valley and on the bank of the Rio Grande, it is down now and is a verry insignificant stream.

We are nooning it about seven miles from last camp. The mountains which contain silver are the only ones which are visible and only obstruct a small portion of the southern vision.

Started at 3 O'Clock, passed through one of the most beautiful pararies I have seen for some time; for twenty leagues square the pararie is thickly covered with ripe mezquit grass, and has the appearance of an oats field when ready for the harvest; this

would have been a splendid place to graze the cattle but it is seven or 8 miles to water. The different colors the mountains around presented made the whole landscape one of unsurpassed beauty. I heartily wished we could encamp here for 8 or 10 days every thing seemed so calm and quiet; a few miles further on, from the top of the elevated land we were on, the rio grande presented its silver serpentine surface. The heavy cottonwood on each side made quite a pleasing picture.

Arrived in camp at dark. Had no regular supper but eat a piece of bacon and flour Tortilla made by the mexicans; put a blanket on the ground used one to cover with, had my saddle bags for a pillow, and had as comfortable a nap as heart could wish, — I have felt better to-day than in some weeks past, dont know the reason, but attribute it to the fact that we are on the road again.

11th Friday — Fine day, have been h[e]lping to unload the carts and carrying the good[s] to the bank of the river. Some of the men are engaged building a raft to carry over the perishable goods. The bottom of the river is very uneven and quicksand. I stript all but my shirt and pitched in, before we got through a cold wind and had like to froze us up; by twelve O'Clock everything except the cattle were over; we encamped on the bank this side all night, had on clean linnen, the first in ten days.

12th Left camp early. Prospect of a fair day, stopped for noon after making about 12 miles; had the confoundedest ride in search of a watering place, I ever had in my whole experience of riding. We had to spur our mules against the small sapling timber and force it out of the way before we could get to the bank of the river. Six miles brought us to the town of San Barbara and Fort Thorn.²⁸

The fort and surrounding buildings cover much more ground than the town, is built entirely of adobes, but with the usual regularity, and a mile or two off has quite a pleasing appearance when compared with the town. The Town is composed of eight

²⁸Fort Thorn had been established upon the west bank of the Rio Grande, December 24, 1853. As Bell indicates by his observation of the adobes, it was yet in process of construction. See Hamersly, as cited in note 27, Part II, 157.

or ten houses of the Mexican style and of the most inferior quality.

Several hundred thousand adobcs cover the ground near the fort, and are to be used for government purposes.

Encamped one mile north of Santa Barabara.

13th Sunday. Clear day, pleasant cool breeze blowing. Will probably remain in camp today; The ballance of our Mexicans leave to-day, it is utterly impossible for the Americans and the Mexicans to agree; our people can not put themselves on a level with the people of that nation; thay hold them in about the same estimation as negros of the south, and Mexicans are almost as proud as the Americans. Killed a beef last night, we were forbid broiling any, the reason assigned, was, the meat did not go as far as when boiled or fried. I think the true reason was stinginess; because the broiled meat is liked by the men and thay eat more, some men are naturally *short stock*, I suppose thay cant help it, being born so, but enough of this. I ought not defile my diary — no matter how poor it is — with such trash. Enough said.

The Mexicans have consented to stay and go through.

Fine night clear and cool.

14th Monday. Clear and warm. We leave at 12 O'Clock. We are now about ninety miles from El Paso, will not strike any settlements for some time. The road was more difficult, than was anticipated, consequently we did [not] arrive in camp untill after night, brought no water along, except enough to make coffee. This and cold bread made our supper. A Mule and horse came into camp about midnight. This warned us to be on the alert. Thay were Indian stock.

15th Caught the horse and mule, thay were verry shy tho'. A friendly Indian (Apache) came in to day and dined with James; the only article of dress worthy of notice is his boots, made of buckskin and turned up at the toe two inches, the extremc end was ornamented by notching. He spoke the Mexican language fluently, and seemed as pleasant as possible for an Indian to be. I look upon their friendship as a humbug, and thay only appear so for the sake of getting into camp and observing the preparations for defence. Left camp about noon. Found an abundance of water along the road, owing to the late rains.

The country through which we are passing is verry beautifull,

and seems as if covered with green velvet so smooth are the hills and plain.

Arrived in camp an hour before sunset. The evening is cool and pleasant. The quiet which reigns around would be almost insufferable [?] if it were not for the fine landscape and sunset.

16th Wednesday. The finest day of the trip, country still beautiful, arrived at Cook's Springs at noon, had what we call dinner. Where water is plenty, these same Cook's²⁰ Springs would be called mud-holes; left camp late in the evening and at dark encamped without water.

17th Thursday. During the night a stiff norther sp[r]ung up, and the whole camp were aroused (unnecessarily) to take care of the cattle, consequently slept little; slight sprinkling rain, an Indian reported to have been seen.

Yesterday we crossed the line which divides the United States into east and West, we have rounded cape Horn, over land, or in other words are now in the great dish which slopes to the Pacific; up to this time we have been coming up hill henceforth will be going down, untill we reach the shore of Pacific Ocean.

Left camp early, day cloudy pleasant cool wind blowing. A party of men were encamped near the road whom we took to be Indians at first view, on nearer view they turned out to be Mexicans cutting timber, for Government.

The Mexicans informed us that there were two parties of Indians ahead, within a few miles. In 12 miles from last camp we came to the *Rio Membris*. It ought to be called the *Rio Disappointment*, for the crossing is as dry as the palm of my hand; 1/4 mile up we found a standing pool in the bed of the river; the water is very good to a thirsty man, one should be careful not to swallow more than a pint of Tadpoles at one drinking. It is now noon, and we may probably dine at a very fashionable hour — that is — about dark.

After an hours search we found one of natures own little gems, in a muddy, filthy hole of black mud. This little spring is beyond all doubt the coldest water I have ever drunk, it has a slight sulphur taste; If this spring was convenient to some town, it could not but be a great watering place.

²⁰Fort Cummings was located at these springs on the northeast side of Cook's Peak, nine years later.

Found a steer on the river, which had been lost by some party before us; the old fellow had been luxuriating on the fine grass around, and for this was condemned to die; time, morning, place twenty five *varas* from the fifth wheel of the Ambulanche.

18th Almost every day our camp presents a new scene, the mountains around present a variety of shapes and hues; from the table to the peak; — the deep blue to the rich green and harvest like yellow; — A rope from one cart to another contains the whole beef, cut into ropes; the ground is varigated from grass green to every color in the catalougue by the different kinds of clothing spread out to dry and air; a quartet of men are sitting under a cart playing at Poker with grains of corn; one has on what once was a fashionable hat, but if the maker could see it he could not, for his life tell, whether the original intention was to make a castor or a cocked hat; — three men are sitting near the fire making a lunch off a broiled shin bone, the rich cream looking marrow looks like living indeed. Another is sitting flat on the ground with a frying pan before him with several pounds melted lead in it, a table spoon tied on a stick answers the purpose of a Ladle. On the fire several camp kettles are boiling and spitting away, filled with various kinds of food; the Flour is being worked up into dough by hands and finger-nails not overly clean, while the head cook, a little short over-important man is flitting around the fire with a dozen utensils in his hands at once, and looks as if *he* was not upon the face of the earth the wheels of time must necesesarily stop.

Our most executive man is verry seriously engaged in pounding a new ox whip on the cart tire. Every blow he strikes with the hand ax, a short exclamation escapes from his whisker hidden mouth, "Give him h—l, he's got no friends!!" Such is camp at present writing. Your servant is sitting in the drivers seat of the Ambulanche, no coat, hat aspiring heavenward, and will soon be off, only three hairs for a foundation; shoes, but no stockings, and pants turned half way up the leg; such is dignified appearance the writer presents at present.

19th Saturday — Night pleasant, prospect of a storm at early morning, passed off though and the sun rose clear and beautifull; was out on guard at sunrise, and noticed Cook's Peak for the first

time. The sun brought it out in bold relief, and is worthy to have some particular name from its altitude.

The wild current grows on the bank of the stream in great profusion, their great size, would make a gardener boast of his productions, the size surpasses *anything* in the way of cultivated Currants. Hops are equally as plenty as currants, and of a fine large quality. Small black grapes are abundant.

20th Sunday, opens beautifully and really does feel like a day to go to church, and the recollection of a Sabbath morning, such as is seen in the old States, recurs vividly to my mind's eye.

Last night we had another prospect of a storm and rain. After a few fitful showers and puffs of wind it cleared up and all was quiet again. We leave at two O'Clock. A few days travel behind us is Hollidays train, composed of one thousand head of cattle about fifty men and six or eight wagons and seventy five head of horses and mules.

Travelled until eight O'Clock, had the ghost of a supper. The elements tried to get up a storm, but did not succeed.

21st Left camp at half past six. The day opens finely, clear, cool, and pleasant. We are encamped on what is supposed to be *Ogo La Vacca* (Cow Spring), about fifteen miles from Rio Membros camp. Last night a signal fire was seen at some distance from us. Found an abundant supply of water at this place, in rock pockets. Leave at two O'Clock. Travelled one hour and two miles and a half. This watering place is very probably *Ogo La Vacca*. A considerable stream is running and is good and palatable.

The mountain scenery for a few days past, is pretty much the same, the soil is tolerably good, grass, first rate gramma. Another storm brewing.

To vary the dullness which pervades a camp, two men a young German and an old crazy one, had a few minutes amusement for the balance of us. The crazy one imagines every one to be his enemy and when any one looks at him he seems insulted. Upon this principle he attacked the young German, but he recoiled without his host; the old fellow pulled the other off his mule, then ran to his gun — which had the cap taken off meanwhile by a by-stander and finally wound up by falling under the young

fellow; the young man got up and James sit down on the crazy man and commanded the peace.

The conversation carried on between the two combatants, was not the least amusing part of it. They were more learned in abusive language than any fighters I ever heard. The words were alternately German and American, with an occasional sp[r]inkle of spluttering words which had no meaning to my ears.

22nd Tuesday opens clear and pleasant.

Last night two Mexicans *vamosed* the *camp*s taking with them four of the best Horses in the drove, three Six Shooters, two Mississippi Rifles, and sundry articles of clothing. These two men were not suspicioned at all and were considered among the best Mexicans of the party; I am almost induced to believe what has often been said of Mexicans generally, that there is not one but what is naturally a rascal, treachery is one fault, but they are poss[e]ssed in a greater degree of a desire to steal.

Six or eight mexicans came into camp last night, from ahead. They were discharged from some party.

Left camp at Three O'Clock. After travelling untill night and making about twelve miles, we encamped on the open prairie without water; had water and bread for supper.

The road forks here, one leads to Chihuahua, the other to California. We take the right hand.³⁰

³⁰Here the herds were following Cooke's Wagon Road, which had been laid out by Lieut. Col. Philip St. George Cooke in 1846. After General Kearny occupied Santa Fé during the Mexican War, he marched direct for California, leaving orders for Cooke to bring the Mormon Battalion and his wagon train. Cooke followed down the valley, passed west from the Rio Grande to the region of the copper mines near present Santa Rita, turned down the road toward Janos, Chihuahua, and then bore off to the southwest. He passed through the Las Playas, opened a wagon road through Guadalupe Pass, near the southeastern corner of Arizona, proceeded on to the San Bernardino Ranch, Sonora, and some sixty-two miles farther west, to the San Pedro, before turning back north toward Tucson and Kearny's course along the Gila. "Report of Lieut. Col. P. St. George Cooke of His March from Santa Fé, New Mexico, to San Diego, Upper California," *Ex. Doc. 1st Sess. 30th Congress*, 554-562. See Bancroft, H. H., *History of California*, V, 483-486, and *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, 417-421 and 477-479.

It should be observed that there was already a Mexican road or trail, from Janos to Fronteras, leading through Guadalupe Pass. Cooke dropped into this trail near the southwestern corner of New Mexico, but experienced considerable difficulty in getting through the Pass. See Antonio García Y Cubas, *Atlas* (Mexico, 1858) *Carta II*; John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*, I, 244; also Cooke, "Report," as cited above, p. 554.

23d Left camp at seven, and travelled untill two and fifteen miles, making about 28 miles from Ojo La Vacca. The day has been verry pleasant, and could not have been more so for traveling. Found water here in pools deposited by late rains, if we had been one day later would not have found water. Along the road found a small yellow flower, that exhaled a most delicious smell, somewhat like the rose geranium; I gathered some, and had an hours enjoyment, by smelling it.

The count[r]y around gives more signs of vegetation, than that through which we have been passing for ten days. The ground is covered with green gramma grass and a great variety of flowers, but the gem of them all, is the one spoken of above.

Encamped for the night, no wood, cooking verry poor; gathered some Parsley and cooked them into passible greens.

Slight drizzling rain during a portion of the night.

List of distanees from San Antonio to El Paso.

From San Antonio to

Leona	89.	Smith's River	15.
Nueces	8.	Muerto	7.
Turkey creek	11.	Van Horn's Wells	36.
Elm Creek	15.	Eagle Springs	22.
Las Moras	7.	Rio Grande	34.
Piedras Pentos	8.	Up same	55.
Mavericks Creek	9 1/2.	San Elizario	6.
Arroyo San Pedro	2 1/2.	Socorro	4 1/2.
San Felipe	12 3/4.	Isoletta	2.
1st Crossing of Devil's Rio . . .	10.	El Paso	14.
Painted Caves	2.	White's Rancho	6.
California Springs	17.	Cotton Woods	15.
Willow Springs	2.	Fort Filmore	17.
2nd Crossing of Devil's Rio . .	19.	Las Crusus	8.
Up D's Rio to Head	23.	Doña Ana	5.
Howard's Springs	42.	San Diago Crossing	15.
Live Oak Creek	32.	Santa Barbara	20.
Military Post on same	3 1/2.	Little Pocatcho	12.
Crossing of the Pecos	4.	Cook's Springs	46.
Up " "	35.	Rio Mimbris	20.
Escondido Creek	18.	Ojo La Vacca	18.
Head of same	7.	Camping Place	25.
Comanche Spring	20.	" "	10.
Leon "	9 1/2.	Natural Wells	35.
1st Crossing of Rio Limpia . .	37.	Small Stream	18.
Spring	6.	Natural Wells	15.
Wild Rose Pass in Limpia		Small Streams	8.
Cañon	5.	Guadalupe Pass (entrance) . .	5.
Up to head Limpia	12.	" " (Middle)	8.
Senaso Piedro	13.	San Bernardino	15.
Rock Creek	8.	Camping Place	18.
Small " (dry)	4.	" "	16.

San Pedra (Head Water)...	18.	Rio Gila	20.
San Pedra (Ancient Ruins)...	18.	“ “ (Bottom).....	18.
Santa Cruz Town.....	23.	Camping Place	15.
Camping Place.....	5.	Rio Gila	14.
Santa Cruz River.....	15.	Fort Yuma	18.
“ “ “	17.	Rio Colorado	10.
Tabac Town	18.	Cook's Wells	18.
Camping Place	18.	Alamo Mucho	29.
San Goutel (Indian Town)...	23.	Sackets Wells	43.
Teuson (Mexican “)..	9.	Tracy Creek	18.
Laguna	10.	Ballicita	16.
Great Pocatcho	25.	San Felipe (Indian town)...	18.
Gila Lagoons	22.	Warner's Rancho	18.
Rio Gila	8.	San Issibella (Indian town)...	10.
Pimos Villages	11.	Camping place	13.
Camping Place	18.	San Pasqual (Indian town). 7.	
Camp Monument (Rio Gila)...	25.	Spanish Rancho	18.
Rio Gila (camping place)...	25.	San Diago (old town).....	15.

This list of watering places is taken from one furnished James at Fort Filmore and is p[r]obably the government list; the distances are, I think taken by instruments* from point to point, and consequently are not correct, considering the unevenness of the ground.

24th Left camp at six o'clock this morning, travelled untill half past ten, making about ten miles. Grass good, road through a series of low mountains covered with grass and occasionally a stunted cedar is to be found.

We are nooning it in a small plain, where we have water in abundance from the rains; fine wood by digging up the roots of chaparrall. This when dry burns wll.

Left camp at half past two, travelled untill quarter past five; made about eight miles; at a distance of four miles the mirage, as we thought, presented us with a beautiful Lake of water. When arrived at, however, it *was a real* Lake. In the dry season the bed is perfectly dry. We are now encamped and will remain during the night; about noon the sun shone very warm, later in the evening it became cloudy and a light breze sprung up, which made it pleasant travelling.

25th Had a pleasant night, slight prospect of rain, left camp at half past five, travelled until half past seven making, about five miles, when we came to Natural Wells. Whether these are the ones spoken of in the list, it is difficult to tell; if these are the ones mentioned, there is a mistake in the measurement.

*Viameter, an instrument that runs on wheels, and each revolution is recorded. [Author's note.]

Had some amusement this morning, the Indian horse caught some few days since, had hobbles put on, probably the first time in his life, such scampering as he made in camp, he tried to run over everything, made desperate efforts to stomp and bite them off, after running after men, horses, cattle, [and] carts finally got the hobbles off and was as quiet as ever.

Had dinner, and a fine shower which cooled the atmosphere somewhat.

Left camp at three o'clock, travelled untill half past seven, making about seven miles, cam[p]ing for the night, near some hills, which we expected to cross this evening, but the distance being greater than expected could not go further before night.

Commenced raining just after dark, and showered untill midnight; About nine o'clock a gun fired by one of the guard, aroused the whole camp, which gave evidence of the close proximity of *Los Indias* and warned us that we are still in the Apache count[r]y, and that danger was near; after scouting around the camp, for a short time, all became quiet again, tho' not asleep, for the bedding was wet through.

26th Saturday, dark and foggy morning.

Passed what is called in Col Cook's list "the steep rocky hill"; a portion of the mountain is covered with a species of oak, known as the Black-Jack. The Bear Grass stem grows to a considerable size here, about four inches through at the base, and from ten to twelve feet high.

Left camp at half past seven, travelled 'till three, and with considerable detention, owing to bad road made ten miles; the small stream described by Col. Cook, on approaching it, gave evidence of being at least a respectable creek, but lo! the hideous form of disappointment thrust itself again before our eyes, and nothing was presented to our view, but the dry bed of the stream; the bottom is tolerably well timbered with a variety of trees, principally cotton wood. The mountain side has some large Pines on it. A few miles down the dry bed found a small spring.

There is every prospect of a severe rain storm. It would be just in time if it should come now, for the cattle have had none for one and a half days.

27th Sunday. Cloudy and damp. Left camp half past six.

Saw a new method for driving fractious steers, this morning;

the cartmen yoked in a new one; when ready to start, he would not move, so the men verry deliberately put a chunk of fire on his rump. After it burnt through the skin he travelled verry well.

Nooning for dinner, grass good and plenty, no wood in the vicinity, rough road to-day, one of the finest landscapes seen on the rout. Water plenty in hollows, left by the late rains, soil stoney but of good quality. Pleasant breze which alleviates the Sun's heat.

The Mexicans are busily engaged in killing a beef. He is a fine fat fellow, and my having been on the sick list for some two weeks, dieting all the time, makes me wish evening were here, so that I can broil a *Tender Loin* steak.

28th Monday, opens clear and warm, after one of the darkest and most disagreeable nights, we have had during the trip.

The cattle made an attempt to stampede twice, during the night, caused by a number of coyotes, attracted by the smell of beef; a few of the thieving rascals are sneaking around the camp this morning, but are too shy to come within gun shot.

Left camp at 4 o'clock, just as we were ready to leave a tremendous rain storm came up and being compelled to be out, and were I could not get at my Gum Cloak got wet to the skin; travelled three miles to highland, and encamped about dark; the ground being wet, and having to use it for a bed-stead, you may judge what a comfortable ? night I had.

This is going to California with a vengeance, in fact a man would not see the Elephant with two tails, if he had more comforts than we have.

The soil here is of good quality; land rolling; wood, stunted Post oak, one mile from the road; Grass, good and of different quality from that behind us. It has a large head of seed, and the cattle eat it gredily.

Some few deer have been seen, but none killed. Water, I expect the old adage, "that the least said &c." is more applicable than any description I could give; however by taking a piece of coffee sack I managed to strain out the Tadpoles—the larger sized animalculae I did not care about altho' verry preceptible to the eye — and filled a demijohn.

The hills are covered with white quartz that seems to have been melted. I am told that this is the gold blossom.

29th Tuesday, sun shining. Waiting in camp to dry beef. Left about one o'clock, made about seven miles amid a sharp rain. Crossed the *second small stream* mentioned by Col. Cook, it was dry, but about three miles further on crossed a wet weather stream of clear rain water. This is delicious drinking water and being soft, of course is fine for washing. The mountains are thickly covered with timber.

30th Sun rose cloudy, still continues so. Air cool, slight wind blowing. Still in camp waiting for our beef to cure.

Prospect of rain induced us to go on, left camp at 8 o'clock, after three miles entered the Guadalupe Pass. There is nothing remarkable about this pass, only that the road is very rough and difficult to travel with wagons; there are two imposing looking stones at different places. The last one is opposite a large cave that runs a short distance in, and seems to have been a camping place. These stones are worthy of some notice from the peculiarity of their position, stand at a great height, and seems as if a touch would send them thundering down the mountain, to the destruction of all below.

31st Thursday, still falling weather, we are about two thirds through the pass, by night we were encamped at some eight miles distance from the outcome. One small wet weather stream we crossed not less than thirty times.

September 1st 1854 Friday. Now encamped near — some three miles — the "Old Rancho of San Bernardino".

About four o'clock in the afternoon a severe rain and Thunder storm came up. The cattle were feeding in the hollow, a vivid flash of lightning which made a report like the explosion of thousand cannon, struck a *white* steer, glancing along the belly, and scorching the hair off, thence to another *white* steer — he showed no marks — about fifty yards distant and killed them both, knocking down all — some twenty — intervening and on the line of the stroke; several men felt the effects, although the camp was about one hundred and fifty yards from the herd. Paid a visit to the old ruins of the rancho; from the plaza enclosed with the walls, and the number of apartments, I should judge that from fifteen to twenty families lived here at the time of its desertion.

Scattered about the plaza are several peices of stone mortars, such as is used at the present day by the Mexicans for pounding

corn; one blackish grey peice in particular seemed to be of the same grit as is used for mill stones. In one corner are the remains of a kiln, the sides of which are covered with salt glazing. I suppose this was used for burning their crockery; portions of the *Toula* roof, still in good preservation lie scattered on the ground; Col. Cooks journal reports the remains of a Peach Orchard (so I am told); we found none. How long this rancho has been deserted, I cannot tell, not having read Cook's report.³¹

Left at two o'clock having been detained with drying the beef killed the day previous by the lightning. After travelling several miles, missed one of the largest steers in the drove. This old fellow from his size and being a mula was a general favorite; and from the sober gait, selected place in the drove and other peculiarities was often the subject of remark and meriment. I forgot to mention that, Cook, reports numerous wild cattle, which I suppose was left by the people of the rancho. We saw no signs of them; We encamped for the night, and sent two men back for the steer. They returned at dark unsuccessfull.

2nd We had a good start this morning. Weather is still lowering and cloudy, had a comfortable night; made about eight miles to camp for noon, found plenty water on the road; a fresh Indian trail seen within one hundred yards camp.

The variety of Grasshopper is numerous here, and some are as gaudily painted as butterflies, one species I noticed in particular, is four inches long.

With what few words I possess, and such poor powers of de-

³¹San Bernardino was one of the early settlements of northeastern Sonora and at one time its vast herds were said to number 80,000 head. On account of the depredations of the Apaches, it was abandoned soon after the breakup of the missions in 1828. Its cattle reverted to the wild state, and Cooke supplied his command with beef from them. They were of a vicious breed, attacking, without provocation, the wagons, teams, and men as they passed through the old San Bernardino ranges. Upon December 11, 1846, Cooke reported that "There was quite an engagement with bulls, and I had to direct the men to load their muskets to defend themselves . . . one ran on a man, caught him in the thigh, and threw him clear over his body lengthwise; then it charged on a team, ran its head under the first mule and tore out the entrails of the one beyond. Another ran against a sergeant, who escaped with severe bruises . . . one ran at a horse tied behind a wagon, and as it escaped the bull struck the wagon with a momentum that forced the hind part of it out of the road. I saw one rush at some pack mules, and kill one of them. . . . We crossed a pretty stream which I named 'Bull Run.'" Cooke, P. St. George, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*, 139-146.

scription, it would be like daubing a superb painting over with mud, to attempt to describe the sunset of this evening; The finest efforts of a painter could not possibly convey an idea of its beauty.

3rd Sunday. Fine clear night; day opens clear and agreeable. Made about six miles to camp for noon. Indian trails — fresh — were again seen this morning, no doubt the rascals are watching us.

On the road side, a letter posted up, gave us the whereabouts of the trains ahead. I have learnt, since on the road, that there is an extensive beef monopoly in San Francisco, composed of men of wealth.

I shall probably be in San Francisco in six weeks, will in all p[r]obability leave the train at the Colorado Rio. Found a Centipede six inches long.

4th Had a fine night, Clear and moonshine.

I recd a challange yesterday evening, from our crazy german; he offers to fight with pistols, or American fashion, what he means by American fashion I cant tell; this morning however, he made a break at me and I endeavored to learn him my fashion of fighting; th[r]ough mistake, I picked up a soap weed instead of the Poker, and he escaped with a few bruises and sound skin. I will copy the challange verbatim, its a rich document.

Mr Bell

You have sade I have stud two times on gard for let him have his Rifle that every man can pich in. — It is no meestake that you have talk about me. I call this verry common talk. I call you now to pech in. "(in the way that I have purpose) to fite with pistol) or with the American fasion the suner you settle it the better. I think it no youse to talk about it any more! Let me know what you will to

Frank

5th Had an unpleasant night. Left camp at nine o'clock. Found plenty of water, known as the head waters of San Pedro.

Counded ten different kinds of grass Hopper; from the shining jetty black, to the Pea green; one kind has no beauties untill he flies, then is displayed a rich pink color under the wings, the outside has a dirty color. Travelled th[r]ee hours and are now noonning it. Started late and encamped about six o'clock.

6th Left about nine o'clock Crossed the San Pedro several times.

At 12 O'Clock we passed the ancient ruins mentioned in Col Cook's Journal; they are composed of five or six walls of old houses, made of adobes a stone correll or two.³² By what people this town was built, I have not been able to learn.

The valley through which the San Pedro passes is a desirable location for ranches. The hills on either side are covered with timber huge loose stones and a good quality of grass; some portions of these hills are verry pretty and contain little tree hidden nooks and reminded me that I could spend an hour pleasantly; as our family were used to do, Sabbath noons at the sp[r]ings on the south of Knoxville.

The rock here is conglomerate, soil of good quality, timber of cotton wood, and oak. Upon the whole this is the most habitable place seen since I left San Antonio.

I should have mentioned that yesterday we passed a newly made grave; the inscription informed us that James Houston lay beneath, and had been killed by the Indians; a letter from Major Erskine, posted on the grave stated that Beck's train had been attacked ten days ago, and this man killed, also one hundred head of cattle taken from the Train.

A few miles on the road, at the ruins of an old rancho some old Peach trees were found, but no fruit; on the top of a small hill, the remains of what seemed to be a smelting furnace were found, also portions of cinder.

About four o'clock we commenced crossing a mountain, of tolerably difficult assent, — tis st[r]ange Col. Cook did not mention this in his journal, we got into the scraps unwarily and had to encamp in them all night.³³

7th Slight rain during a portion of the night.

³²Cooke refers to this as the San Pedro ranch. Along with the settlement at San Bernardino, it was broken up by the incessant attacks of the Apaches. Cooke, as cited in note 31.

³³Cooke's failure to mention this mountain is explained by the fact that the trail herd continued west inside the Mexican line while Cooke's road led north into Arizona along the San Pedro. The trail the herd had taken was one followed by Major Lawrence P. Graham in 1848. He marched from Janos to Santa Cruz before turning north along the stream of the same name to reach Tucson. Bancroft, *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, 479. Cooke, "Report," as cited in note 30, p. 555.

Morning opens foggy and cloudy. Left a cart on the other side of the mountain last night, and are waiting for it to come up.

Left camp about three o'clock, and travelled three or four miles. From the top of a high hill, the beautiful valley in which the town of *Santa Cruz* lies, lay stretched before us; a more desirable place for farming purposes could not be wished for; it has untill very lately been under cultivation, the hedges and diches still remain, and corn stalks are still to be seen on the ground, but the hostility of the Indians has stopped all operations.

Since we arrived at this camp — from where we can see the steeple of the church — we have learned that the Indians have been playing the very devil. *Mangus Colorado* the chief of the Apaches in this section, made an attack on Fairchild's party at the place where we last camped, and drove off his entire stock, killing a brother of Fairchilds, who now lies buried within twenty yards of the ambulanche. The companies of Erskine, Franklin & Dean, and an other party, who are encamped west of Santa Cruz; made up a volunteer party in connection with some citizens, and made pursuit. In going to the scene of action, they came on an other party of Indians and pitched into them, killing Twenty three, and only three of their own party wounded.

The Mexicans report that within twenty five miles, there are one thousand head of cattle, and two hundred warriors.

We are now in the State of Sonora, and in Mexican Territory, or were, when last news came.³⁴

³⁴Among the Texas trail herds in advance of James were those owned by the Fairchilds, by a man named Franklin, by Buck and Bryant, by Dunlap and Houston, and by Major Erskine. Upon August 25, the Apaches killed Houston and stole some twenty head of his and Dunlap's cattle. About the same time the entire Fairchilds herd was taken. Their men stampeded, their wagons were sacked, and one of the owners was killed. Buck and Bryant lost one hundred and forty head. The remaining Fairchilds took his hands and went on to California. Dunlap proceeded into nearly Santa Cruz, Sonora. Franklin, too, camped there, and warning was sent back along the trail to Major Erskine.

In turn Erskine warned James and proceeded on to within three miles of the settlement. There Calahan, commander of Erskine's escort, recruited fifteen men from Erskine's outfit, twenty-three from those belonging to Franklin, Dunlap, and Bryant, and twenty-five Mexicans from Santa Cruz. He turned up the Santa Cruz river, and, according to one account, attacked a party of about forty Indians and killed all but nine. His men took sixty-five head of stock from the Indians, and then discovered that they had attacked a party returning from Mexico, rather than the Indians who had attacked the Texans. But they kept the stock. Erskine, "Diary," 67-69; *Texas State Gazette*, December 2, 1854; Sowell, *Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of Southwest Texas*, 685-690.

8th Friday. Foggy and cool. The nights are very cold, and compell one to use thick clothing. The dews of this climate are astonishing to me, who have been used to dryer one, during the morning enough falls to wet our cloths entirely through.

9th Leave camp to go about three miles lower down the country, passed through Santa Cruz, five or eight hundred is not far wrong from the true number of inhabitants.

Apples, Peaches and Quinces grow in abundance, the two latter are good and of fine size, in fact I have never seen larger Quinces. Several of us went into the orchard and purchased some at the rate of 8 for a *medio*; the bank of the Asequia was lined with women, with their pretty arms bared up to the pit, engaged in washing, one in particular was a very pretty woman, a majority were pasably so, and, in any nation I have never seen so many persons, who were deformed in feature. The sight of deformity along side of beauty, counteracts all a mans desire, to pay homage to the latter, even with the eyes.

The inhabitants of this place are indolent as Mexicans usually are and the poor devils are compelled to be more so; what little they would raise for their own use, is made less th[r]ough fear of the Indians, for the very moment a crop ripens, the red skins appropriate it; as an evidence of the dread they live in, the same evening we encamped below town, thay immediately dispatched a train of Donkey's in our vicinity, for wood. The men never go from town except on horse back, and always with arms, most generally the Lance. This is made of a thrust broken in two and tied firmly into the end of a pole, about eight feet long.

There are a few troops here stationed for the purpose of protection and collecting the revenue, which arises principally from the use of Tobacco in its various forms for smoking; it and paper is a government monopoly, that is, the sale of it. Shucks are not allowed as of course the revenue derived from Paper would immediately disappear.

The most unpalatable article of *Aquadinte* is sold by the pound — as in fact every thing else is — at the rate of one dollar for a *Libro*. Tobacco is sold at five dollars pr pound. It is a good mild article and is unp[r]essed, found some beautiful blankets, one at \$40. I tried to buy but could not make a trade; the woman told me that it took her half a year to make it, which

is no doubt the fact for it was very fine and beautifully figured; and is worked with hands.

The most prominent houses seem to be churches; one abandoned and in an advanced stage of decay. The dwelling houses are all one story, of different digrees of altitude. I imagine the hight of the house, to indicate the wealth and standing of the occupant. The tops are covered with grass. A dilapidated wall surrounds the town. The articles of necessity which cannot be made, are bought from a large town near by, and further into the interior of Sonora. Horses are valued at from \$50 to \$100. These horses are raised in this state, and are very hea[l]thy, strong and handsome.

James having need for some black smith work I went into the shop through curiosity and found a strong built, rather sage looking Mexican with a slight smirk on his countenance caused by the dignified feelings arising from working for *Los Americanos* at the rate of one dollar per shoe — busily engaged in pounding — with rather a quer looking hammer — a mule shoe into a shape that would fit a large Horse foot. He used no bellows, but was content with the heat, coals would make without the aid of wind. The anvil which seemed to be the one p[r]imatively used, was set in a small block and resembled a natural piece of iron rather inclined to the regular; on the ground near the forge an American anvil was laying, and I suppose had been in use for a few days only, — probably bought from some train passing through.

We did not have the honor of seeing the Alcaldia; or Comandante; doubtless it has got to be so common for American[s] to pass through that thay are no great show.

60th We remain in camp all day, to dry beef and recruit the cattle; from the number of American passing and repassing, that belong to the different trains, it looks almost like a civilized country — Near by is the remains of an orchard — gathered some quinces and stewed them with Pelonce or Mexican sugar, and found them exceedingly palatable after being without fruit for some time.

11th The night was warmer than usual, with less dew.

Left camp at eight o'clock, to go a short distance for a better camp.

After three or four miles, came across an old *ranch*o; near the

road were two stone vats, cemented, which were used for tanning purposes. Near this ranch some signs of cultivation were seen. Crossed the Rio Santa Cruz, I suppose, some six or eight times, and are now encamped on its right bank.

The grass here is of several different kinds, and of first rate quality. One in particular has a head nearly as large and heavy as a wheat head.

Some of the men who have examined the old rancho above mentioned inform me that it is very interesting. I have not had time to examine it.

This valley still has the elements for ranches, well timbered, watered and soil first rate.

12th Wednesday I believe. Clear and cool to day.

The cattle were in a great humour for playing this morning, and *did* play very nearly to our cost — of mule and horse flesh — for the scamps, scampered about as if they were trying to get up a stampede.

Left camp at seven — will make an effort to get ahead of all the trains. We have at last out travelled the rain, and bad weather for several days past. We could not wish for better than have had.

Made about fifteen miles today.

13th Had a good start, weather fine, passed several old ranches, grass, good. One rancho — owned by a wealthy Mexican, who is the lordly possessor of eighty leagues of land with some ten or a dozen ranches thereon, — we passed by on this road had a very good house, quite American looking, and tolerably extensive, probably large enough for thirty families, I learn that the owner — the governor of Sonora — intends abandoning it, if this state does not come into the possession of United States; it has only been a few weeks since, that the Indians killed fifty head of sheep, and are continually driving off the stock. The Indians have a large ranch or town some fifteen miles from this — they also have plenty of stock. No wonder when the rogues have no trouble raising it. Travelled 15 miles, still on the banks of the Santa Cruz.

14th About seven miles after leaving camp and some ten shorter than the road distance, we came within one mile of the

town of Tabac.³⁵ I did not visit, it being unwell, weather very fine, too hot if any exception can be taken.

15th Passed through the town of Tabac nothing can be said of it more than it is composed of a few adobe houses with church and watch tower as the most prominent. A few Mexican soldiers are stationed here.

Mezquit trees grow here to a considerable size, twenty to thirty feet high, and twelve to fifteen inches in diameter.

Made eight miles to-day. Weather very warm, more like the middle of summer than the commencement of autumn.

16th Saturday. This day opens fine, makes one feel like lounging, instead of travelling, everything is still, cool without wind. The chirp of birds, and grasshoppers has a soothing effect on ones feelings, and is particularly pleasant after so much "noise and confusion" of travelling.

Immediately upon our arrival in camp, fresh Indian signs were seen upon the road half a mile on.

A second guard, one of our Mexican cartmen, who gloried in the name of Lopez de Santa Anna,— something — I forget what, was found missing; this morning a mule and ox-yoke, some clothing and probably a yoke of oxen, are also gone.

We — in the ambulanche — were travelling behind the cattle and carts when a halt of the carts was made; in a short time I saw a Mexican, slipping along in crouching attitude, with gun in hand and making his way toward the bushes. In a few moments the sharp crack of a rifle sang out, and at a distance of one hundred yards twenty or thirty Buzzards commenced circling into the air; when the Mexicans returned I asked him what he shot at, he told me that there were some twenty *Turkeys* a short distance off on the trees. I never was more amused to see with what earnestness he reported his shot.

Made several halts to day to graze the cattle, only finding good grass scattering — about one mile to the river — now on the west bank. Found water-holes.

A White and black *Crane* was killed to-day, cooked for supper and was quite palatable.

³⁵Tubac was established by the Spaniards as a small presidio in 1752. Bancroft, *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, 369.

Encamped on good grass, — 9 leagues from Teuson, water-holes a few hundred yards to the left of the road.

Prospect of rain — did sprinkle a little before night.

17th Sunday.

Pleasant night, cool. To-day open very warm, too hot in fact for good health. This is strange weather to me, a few days ago the night were cold enough to wear overcoats; now it is almost *too* warm for shirts.

Have been making short marches for three days past, on account of hot weather.

The country on either side of the road is thickly covered with the large species of cactus mentioned by Col. Cook. A short distance and we came to one near the side of the road. It is with considerable feelings of pleasure that I examined it. The body is as large as a flour barrell, five feet up it forks into four stems, the whole highth is not less than twenty feet. Take a bundle of rods two inches in diameter, tie them together, paint a delicate green, stick some pins, point outward in the center of each rod the whole length, and you have a pretty good idea of this species of cactus.

One of the stems was broken off, the whole tree looked as if the slightest wind would blow it down.

Grass is good, plenty of mezquit wood, water scarce, none at all in a dry time.

Encamped on good level ground, and had a comfortable time, of it except the dread of an attack from Indians.

We are now about seven or eight miles from San Goubel.

18th Monday. Fine weather, not so warm as a few days previous.

Marched three hours and made within one mile of San Goubel. The spire of the church and town Watch Tower, can be seen from our camp; thay appear to have had more respect for rules of architecture, and more care for the ravages of time — being built of fine brick — than the towns lately passed through.

The river Santa Cruz sinks into the sand between Tabac and near this place.

This town of San Goubel³⁶ possesses one of the handsomest

³⁶This village, nine miles from Tucson, could have been no other than the old mission of San Javier del Bac. The Anglican pronunciation of

churches of any on the rout; it is built of fire brick and in good preservation. It shows two octagonal towers in front, a dome in the rear, the face is handsomely ornamented with mouldings, and p[r]oper unequalities in the ground plan; standing in front, to the left is a small building p[r]obably used as a p[r]ivate chapel. From the appearance I should judge that when built, it was intended as a residence as well as a church; the natives, who are Pemos Indians, number about one hundred; live in small round huts built of wheat straw, with an opening, one third the size of a small door, and used for that purpose; the natives dress pretty much as other Indians — one half the body naked — some were engaged in making red earthen ware, and used the ox-chip for baking. Their principle food is wheat and is ground by some preperation, p[r]obably like Indian corn. Nothing could induce me to live in this country, and the Jesuits must have seen far, far into the future time when they established these Missions through this wild country; will its history every be written? if it should, no one will read with more avidity than myself; the Missions of Saint Juan, and other near San Antonio, must have been built at the same time and by the same persons. This mission is in better condition than those above mentioned. I saw the poor Indians attending service, thay seemed to me as if they needed something besides spiritual food. The women are dirty looking, hair worn just below the shoulders same as the men and although called civilized are very low in the scale of intelligence.

19th Tuesday. Left camp at 9 o'clock, and travelled four miles. Erskin's camp is in sight. Mountain scenery dull and rugged and without interest; weather warm.

20th Currency here, and in fact, from El Paso up, is principally copper, about the size of a twelve and a half cent peice, and without any regard to weight, is worth one sixteenth of a bit, denomination, one quarter. American coin does not pass, their being a statute against it. The Mexicans, the better class, sometimes get coffee and sugar. The Pemos Indians know noth-

San Javier may have suggested "San Goubel." John Russell Bartlett, while engaged in the boundary survey in 1852, described the village as "truly a miserable place, consisting of from eighty to one hundred huts or wigwams, made of mud or straw, the sole occupants of which are Pimo Indians. . . . In the midst of these hovels stands the largest and most beautiful church in the State of Sonora." Bartlett, as cited in note 30, II, 298.

ing about it. The soil and climate is of such a character that all the nessesaries of life, and a great many of the luxuries, could be raised; either from indolence or Indian depredations, it is not done.

A few Americans who are living here report an abundance of gold in this vicinity; we are within one hundred miles of the Gila river — this Santa Cruz river is said to be one of its tributaries.

James is endeavouring to trade for mules with the *Comandante* of *Teuson*. Nearly one half of our Mules and Horses having died with a disease of the lungs. Mexicans call it *Telale*.

Teuson is within sight, shall not visit it, only pass through.

Amongst others a mounted Mexican came into camp, who had rather a fancy covering for his head. The body seemed to be of paste board; running from the back part, over the center to the middle of the forehead, were short black Turkey feathers. The amusing part of the performance was, occasionally he raised his right hand to the back and made sundry longitudinal motions, like a man would do if digging Potatoes; these gentlemen are all afflicted with this disease; both head and body.

Wednesday. Clear and sunshine. Cool wind blowing. Rumor makes the country before us, as ten times wo[r]se than that through which we came; the road is reported to be good. Other things needful for passable travelling is wanting.

Did pay a visit to town. *Adobe* houses greet the eye upon entrance. The plan is very irregular; the church is about ten by twenty feet, no attempt at ornament, except in the front plastering, immediately over the door and in the gable, is hung a small Bell; on the right hand of the door are two more, upon one is inscribed VUESTRA SENORA DE GUADALOUPE AÑO 1807.

In the same court is the blacksmith shop, a place of importance in these Mexican town. The anvil used is quite a curiosity and came from a mountain of native Iron fifteen miles distant.²⁷ This piece of iron is . . . one third . . . under ground. I suppose it would weigh three and a half tons.

As night approached the sound of a violin in a house nearby, gave some evidence that there would be a Fandango at night;

²⁷The sketch of the anvil and its attendant description is omitted.

these preparations were going on during the hour for confession, and within twenty yards of the church door.

The Military, what shall I say of them? Their appearance twice a day, at morning and evening parade, is well calculated to keep one fat; or kill him; for if a certain amount of laughter will keep one fat, a greater amount would have the latter effect, and the consequence, would in all probability be death. The band of musicians is composed of five boys with brass trumpets, and one with a drum; his style of beating is spasmodic; it is difficult to distinguish the soldiers from the citizens, and can only be done so by the difference in ornament. Each soldier has an ornament stuck on some part of the body, without regard to fitness. They are in fact a set of *ragmuffins*.

The women do the principal part of the work, about the household; the men, long fellows with broad shoulders and no other part in proportion, seemed to be very busily engaged in lounging.

The *Padre* — only reported to have been drunk *once* since our stay — two days — is rather the best specimen of manhood I have seen; and from the rotundity of his corporation — although the thought is impious — I suspected him of indulgence of unspiritual things.

A new *Padre* has just arrived with an escort of some five or six men, all mounted. This one is a younger man and much handsomer. On meeting in front of the church they embraced with considerable strength; the *Padre vejo* came into camp with the comandante. James suggested that a bottle of champagne would not be unpalatable. When he went to get the champagne the Comandante sent word around to not bring too much wine for the Padre would get drunk.

The citizens are making preparations for a three days feast; to celebrate what I cannot learn. Among other things the price of marrying a couple is twenty five dollars. Those who are unable to pay it are compelled to wait until after the feast days are over.

21st Still in camp. South of Teuson about two miles.

Went up in the ambulanche this morning to have some repairing done to the woodwork. A mule pack train came in from *Guymos* and brought intelligence from Mexico of the ratification of the Treaty re-running the line of the Treaty of Hidalgo; we

now consider ourselves in American territory; what the people of this place think of U. S. a[s] their master I can't tell.

One old Mexican says that fifteen years ago he could stand on the high land about town, and count fifteen ranches. Now there is not one. Miserable, degenerate Mexico, once mentioned by other nations with respect; is now the prey of stronger States; while her citizens disappear at the app[r]oach of the white man like the Buffalow, at the intrusion of Hunters upon his roaming ground.

Figs, Apples, Quinces, Pomgranates, Grapes and other fruits grow here. The three latter are now in perfection. Pomegranates are of fine size.

Moved camp to-day ten miles North of Teuson; found water in pockets.

22d Friday. Clear and sunshine, with a prospect of being very warm. Killed a beef this morning. Still in camp waiting for rain ahead. An Indian came into camp last night and reported "no water untill we get to the Gila" and as a proof drank untill he made himself sick; he stated that he had been for two days without; tonight some men came back from the other camp in search of cattle, and stated the Indians had passed them on the road and received water from them; what induced him to lie to us, I cannot tell.

23d Saturday. Very warm today. The last news from town is that a small train of ox teams came in last night; some five or six families. Also Holiday's train is three days behind. The Pemos Indians has had a fight with some Gila Apaches, who have just come up; the Pemos got the best having killed five and capturing some seventy head of horses. Our train is very fortunate. We have not seen more than three or four Indians on the whole trip, while almost every other train has been attacked.

In Teuson the mills used for grinding grain are something odd to me. So far as I could see into one, it is a stone about two feet in diameter set into a box made of mortar. Across the top of the stone is tied two poles, one to pull by the other to lead the Donkey power. It is fed by a woman throwing in a handfull of grain every half hour or so. I am told that one *Finage*²⁸ of grain is one

²⁸A *fanega* is a Spanish measure of grain of approximately one hundred pounds.

day's work; I suppose from the apperance of these mills that the grain is allowed to remain in untill there is too much to grind well. Then the stone is taken out and the flour removed, for there is no opening for it to run out.

24 Sunday. Clear and warm. Still in camp near Teuson, preparing the cattle for the road to Fort Yuma.

Visited town again today. Through favour of Mr. James I dined with the comandante. My desire to learn something of Mexican customs, p[r]obably made me accept the invitation more readily than I otherwise would have done.

Just about dining time the *Padre Veajo* — came in slightly intoxicated— his compa  aro and two others, James Fernyer and myself made the party. The Comandante politely offered me his place, and waited until the second table. His wife, a large stout woman of about two hundred and fifty pounds weight, nearly six feet high, rather handsome, clear skin, and although she has three grand-children does not seem to be more than thirty five years old — did not sit at table with us, but had her meal carried to her own room.

Our first dish was rice cooked with some ingridients to make it palatable, and *Chili Verde* (green pepper) in a separate dish, but to eat to-gether; second was Beef, Squash, Quinces, whole Peppers, Green Beans, cooked seperately, but all, on the table in one dish; third, dried beans, and Pepper to eat with them; fourth, desert, boiled flour Pudding with almonds in it, and Peach Marmalade for sauce.

A large glass tumbler with a pitcher of water composed our drinking, table-ware. The thin and well baked flour Tortilla, common to this country, accompanied the meal . . . Upon the whole I have never — although the style was different — sit down to a meal that was better suited to the appetite than this.

A large number of the men were drunk to-day, their feast not being over; they were dancing and fiddling under a brush shed erected in the street, where was also a monte table, at which the Padre had been betting the night before — so I am told.

The Priests in this country shave the top of their head about four inches in diameter.

25th Monday. Sun shining very warm. We will move to-day — such is the last order, and I am very glad of it, if only to get

good drinking water, for we have been using the water that the cattle are running through and d[r]inking it.

I saw in Teuson at the Donkey mill where James bought some flour, a pair of steelyards made in 1753, such is the date on them.

Left camp at 3 o'clock, travelled until nine stopped one hour, and made ten miles to camp, very little grass, and in patches a small growth of a tree resembling cedar; had no supper, very tired.

26 Tuesday. Very cool morning. Left camp at day-light, count[r]y same as yesterday travelled without dinner, and until three o'clock, arrived at the Big *Pecacho* (Point or Summit) to camp where we found an abundance of water and grass to the right of the road, water in mud gullies.

Some of the men brought an animal into camp, which is rather a curiosity; its body is covered with rings of yellow and brown scales, short and fleshy tail, strong legs with five sharp exposed claws like a cat's, large blunt mouth with sharp tooth and no fangs. This animal resembles the *Guiano* of Central Mexico; it is about fourteen inches long; I suppose it uses in water and on trees.²⁹

27 Wednesday. Pleasant night, slight wind blowing from due East that had a touch of snow coldness. To-day opens clear and cool.

Left camp at half past Three o'clock, travelled until nine, making about seven miles, to camp without water. The road is very dusty, the country is a semi-desert, small patches of grass growing here and there. It is thinly covered with mezquite and a kind of balsamic Cedar Trees. During a heavy rain this half-desert is covered with water and runs into the Gila.

28 Thursday. Weather is still good for travelling, left camp at day light. Country same, after waiting an hour and a half for the carts to come up and exchange oxen — at this place we found the Gila Lagoons — and without getting enough water, went on to the Gila river, found Lagoons all along the road and after travelling about three miles found enough to induce us to camp for the night.

Went to bed supperless, being unwell, from drinking so much mud and water.

29 Friday. Clear. Slight breeze blowing from the east. Near our camp there is half a dozen *Pemos* huts; after breakfast several

²⁹Evidently this was a Gila monster.

of us went to see them, found four women at home, the men are absent at some large villages further on, probably at work; two of the women seem to be about 18 years old, the others much older. The young ones were *enciente* and seemed to have a good deal of modesty, for they endeavoured to hide it by wrapping a blanket around their body. This blanket is entirely white, thickly woven, is probably their own handy work, and usually fastens around the waist, reaching to the knees. These women are large, well formed and healthy; the two young ones were moderately good looking. One had a very sweet laugh which any city belle would be proud to have.

Their food is the Mezquite Bean; prepared by pounding in a mortar made in the earth, and with a Woden pestle. The pod alone is made into meal, the bean being too hard and not easily broken. When sufficiently beaten it looks something like cob meal. This is put into a water tight basket, water poured on, several times, before it is fit for bread — the liquor is like new metheglin and used as a drink. The pulp is then taken in the hand and pressed untill the water is all out, put into a small round bottomed vessel, again p[re]ssed down and allowed to remain to harden. Now it is ready to eat. It has a honey sweet taste; and would be palatable but for their dirty manner of making it.

One of the women pressed out some juice with her di[r]ty hand, then offered it to us to drink. I drank some through curiosity, but my stomach like to have revolted at it.

Sandals in place of shoes, are worn. Their hair is of Raven blackness, coarse, long, and falls from the crown entirely over the head, with the exception of a space the width of the forehead, which is cut off even with the eyebrows.

The Huts are made of brush with a little dirt thrown on the top, ground floor, without mats; the only utensils, or in fact everything in the way of furniture they were posed of, is the basket and burnt clay bowls. They are an inoffensive race. I showed them my large six shooter which made them turn away with fear and could not be induced to handle it.

October 2d We have been on the Rio Gila since the 30th of last month. This is a rapid river, with a good deal of sand floating in it. The water is very good and cool, particularly after we have been drinking out of mud puddles for five or six days past.

We are now encamped off the river several miles, and at the commencement of a *Jornado* of forty miles.

The Pemos villages extend along the banks of this stream for twelve or fifteen miles; at the first one we found eight Americans from California who are prospecting for gold. They report success twenty-five miles up the Gila, but for want of water cannot be worked.

The Chief of this tribe or rather the two tribes — Coco Mari-sopas and Pemos — informed us that the Apaches had sent word that as soon as their Crops — (the Pemos) were harvested that they would be down to fight with them. The Pemos can muster about two thousand warriors, of as fine looking men as any southern tribe; the women are a beautifully formed race with the exception of the face which is tolerably ugly.

Some of these Indians all the sexes and ages came into camp with their heads thickly covered with mud. The soil here has a great deal of *Saleratus* in it, and is said to be an effectual cure for vermin.

Some few make desperate attempts to improve their facial features by painting and tattooing with various colors.

It is impossible to trade with them to advantage, or even as an accomodation, for instance; two bits is asked for all sized melons, and a good cotton shirt will not buy more than one. They seem to have no idea of the value of anything we Americans possess; we bought some Corn and Melons as matter of necessity.

Ever since we struck their towns, their presence has been a great annoyance to us, for, beside their begging, thay will steal anything that can be carried of[f], even to scraps of rawhide. This morning I missed my Canteen and a chain Hobble, which was fastened to the back of the Ambulanche. Upon the whole I believe thay are a great set of scoundrels, and will at some future day give our Government much trouble.

3d Tuesday. Clear and warm. Encamped in an open paraire without any shade, and I believe some four or five miles below the Pemos village.

The corn, beans, watermelons, &c grown here is very inferior in size, although the quality seems good enough; I attribute it to want of strength of soil; the soil is of a whiteish clay character

and contains much saleratus, so much in fact that large pools of water, is almost unfit for drinking.

Sitting quietly down, after supper, a few nights ago, several of us made a calculation of the amount of property lost during the present year, on this route. At reasonable calculations we make out that, three thousand head of cattle at \$25 each, \$75,000, and enough mules, Horses and other property destroyed to make \$25,000 more, making in all \$100,000, not very far from the true amount.

The Indians are in possession of 3/4 of it.

We left camp to-day at 5 o'clock, intending to travel all night. During the night we passed a forest of the tall, ribbed, cactus, some were two and a half feet th[r]ough and thirty feet high.

Stopped for breakfast at 3 o'clock, making about twenty miles; all along the road there is as good grass as can be found anywhere on the trip.

4 Wednesday. Fine day. Left camp about seven, travelled until ten, nooned it until four, left and made "camp monument" about nine o'clock this evening. We p[r]obably came over this "Jornado" of forty three miles with as little hurt to the cattle as ane one else before us, lost only one steer.

Found good cool water in a *Lagoona* by the roadside.

5 Thursday. Cloudy last night, prospect of rain at early morning, it came about ten o'clock, not very severe tho.

Toward noon had a bath in the *Lagoona*. — You may imagine how grateful it was after driving for two days and nights through clouds of dust. . . .⁴⁰

This camp takes its name from the monument erected by the U. S. and Mexican Surveyors; it is a small mound with a square post set in the top, with this inscription: "U. S. & Mexican Boundary Survey 1851. Middle of Rio Gila bears North 66° 1/4 West distant 1958 feet. Decem 12th A. B. Gray U. S. Surveyor."

6th Friday. Fine day for travelling. As we left camp we entered the Gila bottom, and for one mile had a heavy growth of Careless Weed; it must have been ten feet high, and with difficulty we could get through.

Made eighteen miles today, after noon we watered in the river.

⁴⁰Here the diary contains a page of pencil sketches of various cactii native to the country through which the trail herd was passing, together with some brief comments on each.

Near night found a camping place one mile from water. In passing along, saw a number of white birds, with the tips of the wings black; they were about the size of a crow.

Passing through the forest of cactii a few days ago I noticed two Indian arrows high up in two of them, for what purpose I can't tell; the arrows were shot entirely through.

7th Saturday. Clear and warm.

Killed a beef today; ate enormously of it after being without for some time. Had a comfortable bath.

8th Sunday. Left camp early, and made about twelve miles to camp on the Rio.

Rough and rocky road; near the roadside is a small hill of rocks. These are covered with various characters such as Indians are accustomed to make on stone, the surface is black, and hard, it seems as if the figures were scratched th[r]ough the surface, and time has worn them some deeper, and given them the appearance of natural grey veins in the stone.

Two families from California were at the river, their destination is Teuson, or the valley of the Santa Cruz. They gave us some late news of the ratification of the Treaty, also of the trains ahead.

They report an immense emmigration to this section of country from California; being out of provisions, we sold them some, and come on our way, rejoicing at the prospect ahead.

9th Left camp to-day at dawn to take advantage of the cool of the day.

Country same as yesterday; two steep hills to cross. Crossed the Gila three or four times.

At noon while trying to get a nap of sleep, the horse flies annoyed me exceedingly. Horse flies is not the proper name in this country, for they preferred man flesh to horse flesh.

Now encamped on good grass, without water; I suppose we came twelve miles today; found numerous peicies of wagons scattered along the road.

10th Left camp early, came into the river about two o'clock, grass scarce along the road, near night found plenty, but without water. Made about seventeen miles to-day.

11th Wednesday. Clear and fine weather. In two miles from last camp, found water in gullies sufficient for the animals, river one and a half miles off. Grass good and abundant on the hills.

12th Encamped last night where the hills almost come into the river; we stopped without both water and grass; moved on two miles, found water in bayous from the river, rather brakish; th[r]ough another fault we crossed the bayou instead of crossing the hills to the left. After going about one mile and a half on the high lands we had to stop the cattle to graze where there was no grass. This is a fact! the ground is sand and pebbles with a small growth of cedar on it, as for grass, two oxen could devour all the grass on a acre.

Made ten miles and found first rate Gramma grass, no water.

On the road, saw a Cactus, twenty feet high, with a hub band around it, one foot from the top, this must have been put on several years ago.

The mountain scenery to-day — the outline, is unsurpassed by any on the rout, some that seem to be forty miles distant, present a succession of domes, spires and cupolas.

13th Some men from Holliday's train came up today; they have pack mules and are going th[r]ough to Los Angeles.

Found six or eight men near out encampment last night, going to Texas from California, they report an abundance of Careless Weed and water on the desert; this is good news indeed and every one rejoices at it.

Came ten miles today, found good grass near the river. Had a bath and clean linnen; this is one of my greatest pleasures. . . .

14 Saturday. Clear warm weather. Left camp at nine o'clock, made fifteen miles to water and grass, water in the Gila, no grass at all on the road.

Four of us were detailed to go with the Horses & Mules about one mile from camp to graze; not having my Buffalow robe along I caught a severe cold and have had a pain in the back all day.

15 Sunday. Warm summer day. Nights very cool, so much so that extra clothing is required.

Left camp at nine o'clock, road very rough and dusty, made about eighteen miles; found water and grass and said to be twelve miles from the Colorado. It was quite an amusing sight to see the men after getting into camp, their clothing and faces thickly covered with dust; lines of perspiration in every direction on the face, they looked as if ready for their part on the stage.

An Indian — probably a Yuma — came near camp on the fourth

watch, was hailed, gave no answer, and would have been shot if he had not "vamosed."

16th Monday. Clear pleasant sunshine. Last night we had a touch of old winter.

Remained in camp all day, while James has gone to the Colorado to make arrangements for crossing his cattle. Erskin's camp is about four miles below; he is in a quandary, whether to swim his cattle or ferry; the price of ferrying is -- for cattle -- \$1.50 per head; Man \$2.00, Waggon \$8. The ferryman offered, that he would deliver him over entire for \$1500.

After seeing the cattle empty and short of feed, for so long a time, it astonished me to see how they would stuff themselves as they did tonight; they looked as if they would bust.

17th Tuesday, fine day. Killed a beef yesterday, and as usual each man was busy during the day roasting bones, steaks, narrow guts and other nice parts.

In camp all day waiting for Erskine to cross the Rio.

Had a bath in a Lagoon on the Gila about one mile distant.

I am doged tired of this trip, it seems the nearer I get to the end, the more I dislike it, one trip does for a lifetime.

18th Wednesday, opens very warm.

to

21 About fifteen miles brought us to the ferry or within a few miles where we encamped until next morning. Fort Yuma, which derives its name from the Yuma Indians, is situated near the junction of the Gila and Colorado rivers on a high bluff of rock, and presents quite a respectable appearance.⁴¹

Left camp early, commenced crossing about nine o'clock, got through about dark, encamped on the bank all night.

For crossing the entire train it cost about \$850.00, one day's work; we made an effort to swim about one hundred head by using a decoy ox, but did not succeed.

This river has a changable bed, the banks are continually washing, being of sand, it is now falling rapidly. A small Steamer which is owned by the government plies between the fort and

⁴¹Fort Yuma was established on the west bank of the Colorado, opposite the mouth of the Gila, November 27, 1850. Thomas H. S. Hamersly, *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States for One Hundred Years*, II, 162.

mouth; distance 150 miles, and makes the going and return trip about every fifteen days.

This stream will never be of any great importance in a commercial point of view, it is not over three hundred yards wide, and when at low water must be quite an insignificant one.

One of our men while taking a decoy ox to the bar had like to have been drowned, he hallowed for the boat; by some exertion it was taken to him just in time to save him.

The men of the Yuma tribe are remarkable for statue. I have not seen one who was [less] than six feet high.

The men dress as other tribes do, a waist band; a piece of cotton cloth, drawn from the navel down, th[r]ough the crotch and again through the waist band on the back. Nearly all wear ornaments in the nose, on the wrist, ankle and neck. The clothing they manage to get hold of, is almost indescribable and runs from a common cotton long shirt to a military coat. I noticed one Indian, who seemed particularly proud of his coat, and had endeavored to make an improvement, by sewing brass buttons along the seams of the back.

The usual dress for the females is the soft bark of the cotton wood, torn into shreds, about two and a half feet long, then fastened about the waist, several thicknesses is put on, and more particularly behind is thicker than the front, in the center of the back is drawn tighter than any other place which gives it the appearance of the fashion of dress five or six years ago—the large “bustle” and “joint behind.”

These women seem conscious of their handsom forms, and when walking give a peculiar grace and beauty to their locomotion; the bark hanging down to the knees like fringe, swinging from side to side exposing from the knees down the well turned leg and ankle with small foot;—from the waist upward the fine bust, breasts, indicating their age, the beautiful taper[ing] arms having strength as well as beauty. In fact, their appearance when in motion reminded me very much of the Peacock strutting with his tail spread.

Some few are hanging about the fort; selling their charms; as a general thing, this is not the case, it being degrading in the highest degree, and probably punishable for them to associate thus, with other than their own nation.

Pasquall, the chief of the Yumas, has been about the ferry

several times; upon inquiring his height I was told in his bare feet he stood six feet six inches.

After crossing we encamped and herded on the Western bank; had much difficulty for the cattle were hungry; made an early start to go to Cook's Well;⁴² arrived within one mile of a newly found Lagoon on the right hand of the road and herded for the night. Owing to the darkness and difficulty of travelling through the weeds, myself and two others were encamped with the ambulance, opposite the Lagoon;— at day light the cattle were watered, then driven out about half a mile to a patch of Careless Weed, there being a scarcity of grass. After feeding for one or two hours they were driven back to water, preparatory for starting; in half an hour Mr. James came to camp, *ordered all* to make ready for an immediate start, that the cattle were dying and about forty then dead, in an hour one hundred were dead, others were tumbling about ready to fall and die; such havoc among cattle was never seen; it looked like taking a man's property away at one sweep; James was cool about it believing in the old saying "that it was no use to cry, &."⁴³

The oxen are all dead, consequently the carts are left behind, also two Mexican cartmen, and various goods appertaining to such a trip.

Throwing into the Ambulance the bedding, something to eat and a few cooking utensils, the cattle were started without further delay.

I am left behind to make disposition of the effects left; will leave for the ferry in a few hours.

"Philip St. George Cooke reached this point with his command in his march from New Mexico, dug the old well out and then excavated a new one. Hence his name was applied to the watering place. See Cooke, "Report," as cited in note 30, p. 558.

"Herds upon the California Trail continued to lose cattle at this point for many years. In 1869 the late John Nichols, of Lampasas, was a hand with a herd driven from his country by Jim Hill and Tom Toland. He remembered the *laguna* of which Bell speaks, formed, he said, by overflow of the Colorado. "There had been no overflow for two years, however," he recalled, "and all the grass was gone. But in some of the swags there were tall careless weeds which were very good feed for cattle, but dangerous. If poor and hungry cattle got on these and filled up, and then the cowboys started to driving them, they would swell up, and if you did not stop it would kill your stock. Chat Helms, a sensible, one-eyed gambler, told us that. We let our cattle fill up and started to driving, and they began to swell and looked like they would burst. We rounded them up and they went down in about two hours." John Nichols to J. Evetts Haley, May 15, 1927.

Arrived at the ferry about dark. I had to borrow eight oxen to haul the carts in —the second day a son of the ferryman and myself succeeded in finding twenty two head of James cattle.

27 Friday

Holliday's train will commence crossing tomorrow. George Craig from San Antonio, and Holliday were here yesterday; I will go on with them.

29th The Trains crossed at the upper ferry yesterday. They will leave for the desert this evening or tomorrow.

In looking over the books of the ferry company, I find that over four thousand head of cattle have crossed here. This ferry is valued at twenty thousand dollars; the entire boat was hauled in sections, from Warner's Rancho on the other side of the desert, and one hundred and forty miles from here.

I learn that "talking Jimmy Campbell" from San Antonio, and three other trains are still behind. It will be a loosing business for all who have brought cattle this year; at Los Angeles fat beef cattle are worth only from twenty five to thirty dollars pr head.

This is now the last day of October, and the weather is like Spring, except a few mornings I have been going without any coat all the time.

The tide of emigration is rapidly rolling into the newly acquired territory in Sonora. The beautiful valley of the Santa Cruz River seems to be the principle point of destination.

Holliday agrees to take my baggage and the two Mexicans but will not take the woman—one of them has a woman—under any consideration; says there is nothing under heaven that could induce him to carry a woman in a train. What an ungallant man!

Holliday is a great, big, Elephant looking man, and seems to have a good deal of the "milk of human kindness" in his bosom, and set him down at once as a clever man.

During my stay at Pilot Knob I made my home at Mr Thompson's—one of the owners of the ferry, and must do him the justice to say that a cleverer man I have not met with for many a day. Mr. Thompson has been for several years an unsettled citizen of Sonora and California and in former times kept a hotel in Austin City; he anticipates a great run of custom for some time to come from the emigration to Sonora.

To-day a train of forty mules and twenty three men arrived

from Los Angeles on their way to Santa Cruz Valley, also a train of Mexicans, about the same number, on their way to the settlements in California, from Sonora.

We left—Geo. Craig and myself—Pilot Knob to-day about two o'clock and encamped on the desert five miles further than Cook's Wells.

A severe Norther sprang up on the night of the twenty eight, and continued till to-night to twelve o'clock; the clouds of sand, with the piercing coldness made travelling exceedingly uncomfortable, and had like to have froze us out.

31 Tuesday. Left camp at sun-rise, slight norther blowing although prospect of a fair day.

November 6th.

Now encamped at the Balleceta (small valley) there is a small grocery store on the road side.

Stopped at two camping places on the desert, not mentioned in the List. It is a difficult trip, and is a good conclusion to the over land rout to California.

About forty head of Ryan's cattle died of poison at the Big Lagoon.

Having the care of a broken down Horse up to the [] Cane Creek, it made the trip much harder than it would have been otherwise; by walking occasionally I got along so-so. Since I left him have been riding *on foot*; I can say it is rather working one's passage to California.

The Mountain scenery around the valley in which we are encamped has no points of beauty, they are almost destitute of trees, immediately on the top are some few, which can only be seen at full size through the Telescope. Report says that there are plenty of Deer and very fat.

11th Saturday.

Encamped within sight of Warner's Rancho a fine spring; two or three straw houses situated in a beautiful little valley compose the celebrated place of Warner's Rancho.

The valley through which we have been passing for two days past is very narrow, no grass, p[r]etty place for summer residences; an occasional Indian village picturesqly situated in the canñons. Live Oak in abundance.

17 Friday.

Owing to natural causes I have been living in Ryan's Camp — in Warner's Valley two miles South of the Rancho — until to-day.

During my stay with Ryan I concluded to lend a hand and see if it were possible to live decently in the pariries, so I took a fancy to improve the breads not knowing at the time whether my knowledge would go so far as to know how to mix the dough; into it I went, up to the elbows, found it difficult to get the buiscuit into any shape except all sorts of shape put them into the oven watched closely the process of baking untill done, when lo and behold I very nearly equalled the buiscuits made at home, and *would* have done so only for the want of a little Butter; at all events I p[r]oved such a good Baker, that it fell to my lot to exercise my talents at every meal.

This morning one of James Mexicans — Gomez — arrived with two pack mules for the baggage. You may guess I was glad; for this place; is notorious all over California for being the coldest in the State; the day is exceding pleasant, the nights are exceding cold so much so that you think you will freze before day appears; a half dozen Blankets is not a surplus.

Within five miles from the Rancho is to be found the Agua Calliente (Hot Springs). I had no means of going to see them, or would have done so. They are said to be a Pancea for all rheumatic complaints.

In the direction of South East, at a distance of seven miles is the Indian village of San Isibella, near is a Jesuitical Mission, said to be one of the finest in this country.

Some Indians who were on a hunting excursion, passed through camp, when I took occasion to examine their arms, &c. A stick like a Hame was used for killing Rabbits, thrown from the hand along the ground.

After cooking some wheat bread, parching and grinding some coffee, packing our mules; we started about one o'clock, made about fifteen miles through a well timbered, but otherwise an uninteresting country, and encamped near a small stream, in the vicinity of an Indian village.

Supper composed of Beef ribs spitted on a stick and roasted before the fire, coffee, and cold bread, prepared by Gomez, my Mexican assistant was soon dispatched; my pipe was then in re-

quest, after a comfortable smoke I retired, but could not sleep for thinking about home, and future prospects.

18 Saturday. We arose before day, with the p[r]ospect for a fair one — soon finished breakfast, packed our mules and were on the road again; — rough road, view obstructed by the mountains, passed two small Wagon Trains, arrived at the Indian town of Temecula⁴⁴ about at two o'clock — p[r]etty good travelling for pack mules twenty miles.

Stopped at Mr. John Rain's home — a San Antonian, who is superintending a ranch here, and am content at the app[r]oach of a termination of my long journey.

19 Sunday. Prospect of rain today, a thing, I am told, which rarely happens here, still a small stream of good water nearby runs all the year.

This village contains a population of about six hundred souls. They are industrious enough to raise a sufficiency to keep them from starving, but generally, as other Indians are, of no account as citizens; their habits indicate somewhat of civilization; wearing clothing and partly under the influence of the Catholic Church.

20 Watermelons, raised in July last, are still in good preservation here.

Wild Duck and Geese are abundant within sight of the House; three or five miles in the canyons Bear and Deer are found in abundance.

A few nights since a loud singing in the Town attracted my attention. One of the men who lives with Rains suggested we should go and see them dancing, I at once agreed; — this man, a Fleming by birth, who had been interp[r]eter to the different tribes on the Lakes and speaks some four civilized languages, has been living among these Indians four years. I could have scarcely found a better companion; we entered the little plaza surrounded by huts built of Toula about ten o'clock. This was too early, for the spirit scarcely enters before twelve, although they assemble at sundown; the interval is kept up by conversation, low singing an occasional dancer appearing, going through a few staves of song then retiring. This being a preparatory, half religious, half pastime-meeting for a grand fete to take place on Saturday, when

⁴⁴This was an important Luiseño village with a population of 388 in 1865. Hodge, F. W., *Handbook of American Indians*, II, 726-727.

some of their up country friends are coming on a visit. I could see very little that is worth describing; however it was worth seeing. A log fire in the centre, cast its red light around the small space showing the strongly marked features of about one hundred Indians. The old men, were seated nearest the fire, the younger ones came next while the women were kept in the background; a few boys and girls were asleep on the ground, not being sufficiently interested to keep awake, or concluding to take a nap before the real business had commenced.

Those who were nearest the fire attracted my attention more than the others; time seemed to have fought against them in vain, and at last concluded to give up in despair; their faces so filled with wrinkles that it was difficult to distinguish the mouth, their skin like brown tanned leather, their long white hair hanging down on their shoulders made them look, to me, more than a hundred years old; the low monotonous, but not unpleasant singing, with the Ha! Ha! He-e-e chorus, accompanied by the Guitar . . . the few remarks made sometimes amusing, sometime serious, were enjoyed by these old men with all the gusto of youth; one would call out "give me a corn shuck," another "where are the seven stars," another replied by saying, "never mind, we are going to stay here all night"; nearly all were smoking cigarritos; so passed the time, the spirit seemed to move none more than to dancing and confesing in song to one and another their little faults and hatred.

Around the walls were hung some of their finery. The dancers held in their hands Hawks feathers, and by rolling the hands over would bring them against their faces, seeming to imbibe excitement from them, through the nose.

The cold became to severe for me, and I left reflecting on these people, their contentment, happiness and simplicity.

The *Guitar* is made of small Terapin shells, the edges fasened together with dried beans put inside, several of these compose the instrument, by runing a stick through the centre, the music ? has the same melodious captivating sound that a "Childs rattle" produces.

The performer seated on a low stool — hewn from the solid wood — his face indicating memory, love, forgetfulness, and all other feelings consequent upon hearing music, where it affects the hearer, th[r]owing his body into various swaying motions, seeming concious that he was the most important pe[r]son in the

g[r]oup, was the most amusing part of the spectacle; at the conclusion of each song or dance; the old men would utter a prolonged H = = a! to evince their satisfaction.

These Indians are small in statue, but well formed, seeming to enjoy good health and are p[r]obably the most contented people on earth. U. S. does nothing for them. They are fond of gambling and during the winter, time is spent with the least possible labor.

The interpreter tells me that by the advice of their Physician (an Indian) the Sweating bath is used to promote health. The Bath house is made of poles and mud, air tight, heated with fire; after the hot bath they jump into the cold stream; this bath would suffocate any one, but an Indian; the house is filled with smoke, how they bear it I can't understand.

One of their most peculiar ceremonies is the "living Burial." A Maiden when she arrived at that period where Nature indicates her aproximation to womanhood, is buried for some time, in the ground in a grave heated with fire and a large heated stone on the stomach; during the time, the men and women are dancing, singing and feasting over the grave; the Interpreter tells me that some times it causes their death.

Quantities of grain game &c is ready for presentation to their friends from above, during the feast.

28 Tuesday. Had a severe Norther a few days ago. Weather is unexceptionable, the freshness of vegetation is only wanting to make it equal to Spring.

Had a comfortable bath a few days since in the stream nearby.

While in the Rancheria (Town) the other evening, an aged Indian came up and requested something. The Inte[r]preter explained what he wanted — Tobacco—and I gave him a small peice; he received it thankfully, invoked a blessing on my head, and informed me that "God would pay for it."

Quite a good looking Indian woman who had a child in arms came to the door one morning and asked for something to eat, "Do give me something to eat, I am so hungry, and suckling my child too."

Last night I recd a letter from James. I had begun to think, he had left me in the lurch, to get to Los Angelles the best way I could. I start in a few minutes on mule back. Made nine miles to Ryan's Camp. Started early next morning; by eight o'clock we had made forty miles; very tired stopped at a Mexican house — a

cup of coffee with some bread and beef we brought along, made our supper; slept in the kitchen — after some breakfast next morning early, started for Los Angeles — about forty-five miles. Great many Cattle, Horses & sheep in this valley; the hills look as if vegetation never would sp[r]ing up again they are kept so clean by the animals grazing on them.

Came to William's Rancho early, fed our animals with Barley and started on; came to what is called the *Monte* about noon. This valley is said to be the richest in California and was once the bed of a large lake, the soil is deposit and of immense richness and depth. This must necessarily be so; for years the deposit from enormous herds of cattle &c has been washing into the lake; it is settling rapidly, has a small town in it called Franklin, in which there is quite a respectable looking Mission; land here is worth from five to twenty dollars pr acre.

Arrived in Los Angeles de Pueblo, at nine o'clock — found several acquaintances and others from San Antonio.

We made hard travel for our animals, in order to meet the steamer. To our disappointment it left the day before we got in, so I am compelled to remain one week.

After remaining in town a few days I went to Dunn & Cameron Camp, nine miles from town, so as to avoid the heavy expense at the Hotell.

Around the town of Los Angeles are numerous vineyards. Fresh grapes on the table every day; also Celery, Parsnips, Carrots, Beets, Irish and Sweet Potatoes, Cabbage, Cauliflour and other vegetables.

The Landlord of the Hotell gave me some native wine, which is of splendid quality, and which I class Sherry. The wine at El Paso is not to be compared to it, although the fruit is about the same; p[r]obably at El Paso there is no one who understands the making of wine.

It is my opinion, that this county of Los Angeles, in five years from this time will be the first county in the state, agriculturally I mean; in the monte I saw corn fifteen feet in highth, and where the corn had been cleared away, Pumpkins which would weigh from thirty to fifty pounds, thickly covered the ground.

Hundreds of acres are covered with wild Mustard; how I longed for some of the young shoots cooked into salad.

The town of Los Angeles is slowly improving, and although

there is now starting a competition town — some six miles from San Pedro on the coast, this place Los Angeles, must for all time to come be the most important town in the county. An Artesian well — the fi[r]st one — is now being bored — the diameter of the augur is six inches — the depth attained to is three hundred and fifty feet; the owner proposes to supply the town, in case he should succeed in getting water.

Having made arrangements sooner than I expected, I left in a hurry, taking passage on board the steamship *America*, a fine boat; after three days travel and stopping at several intermediate port towns, some of which are beautifully situated on the mountain slopes, we entered the Golden Gate after night, which I regretted, for it deprived me of seeing from the Harbour the beautiful city of San Francisco.

Sam had been down expecting to meet me at this city so I just missed seeing him one day.

San Francisco has many fancy names to indicate its splendour, rapid growth, &c but none seem to me, so app[r]op[r]iate as the "Magic City," for a man who has never seen it, can form no idea of what San Francisco is; only about five years old, burnt down twice; the tast displayed in architecture; the rapidity with which improvements are pushed forward the groaning tables of the market men, forests of shipping, the unceasing roar of the steam from enormous black Hulls; the din of drays, water carts, cabs &c, make a man question whether, the stories told in the Arabian Nights Entertainments of the Wonderful Lamp, is not true.

On entering any street, in a business part of the city, the first question arising in ones mind, is, "Where do so many fine horses come from." The Dray and heavy Draught ho[r]ses are brought from Sidney in Australia; the enormous mules and lighter ho[r]ses come across the Plains from the States.

The City is now supplied with water, by carts, the Fire Department from enormous cisterns under and at the corners of the streets. The enormous expense of supplying the city th[r]ough pipes the distance being great has alone kept them from so doing. Their fire proof houses is their only safty now.

One third of the City is built on water lots, a large Hotell has under its foundation the Hulk of a large ship which is used for a cellar.

Sam came down from Sacramento, when he saw my arrival announced in the lists of Passengers; after remaining a few days, we started at noon, in one of the half dozen daily packets, for Sacramento. These steamers are about as well kept, as the steamers on the Mississippi river. Distance from S. F. to Sac. is about one hundred and fifty miles.

The stageing from one point to another is an enormous business, and makes an old states' man ashamed of his "hundred-years-behind-the-time" state.

We arrived at Sacramento about ten o'clock at night; this is quite an impo[r]tant place, and is now the permanent Capitol. The citizens, claim more enterprize and energy in p[r]opo[r]tion to their population than the San Franciscans.

It is situated on the Sacramento River which is about like the Cumberland at Nashville, and is navigable at all times. At an expense of two hundred thousand dollars a splendid Levee has been built around the city, water is plentifully supplied, and gas works are now in p[r]ogress of erection.

Leaving Sacramento you pass through several little towns and arrive at Stockton — thense you strike the mining districts, where the whole dry beds of streams have been turned completely over from two to seven feet deep. Occasionally a small settlement of miners' camps appear and disappear as the coach whirls thro'.

The road from Stockton to Mariposa is exceedingly rough and hilly, and no other people except Californians would have though[t] of surveying a line of coaches th[r]ough so new and wild a country.

Mariposa (Butterfly) is anything else but a butterfly. Neither is there anything about it that p[r]oduces as much pleasure as the sight of one of those little insects.

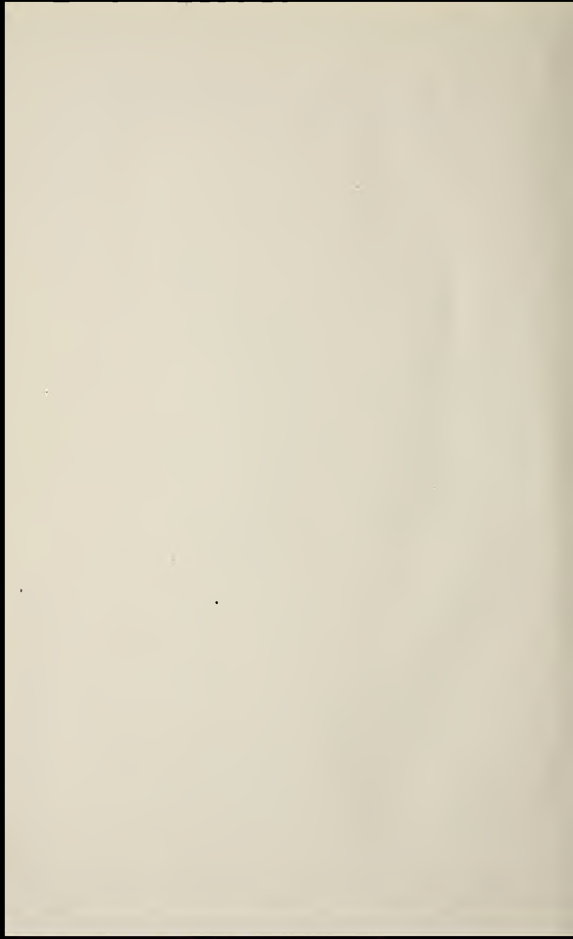
Mariposa, the county seat of the county of the same name, is situated on the abrupt side of a mountain and between two; there is room enough at the foot of the town for the Mariposa river to run, when it does run; the greater part of the year there is not a particle of water in it. The appearance of the entire bed indicates the p[r]esence of the precious metals, being of bluish slate stone.

Population is about three or four hundred, three fourth of whom are males. Buildings are of wood, with the exception of about two or three; a supply [of] water is got from the numerous private wells. There is now a p[r]oject on foot to supply the town and mining interest from the Merced river, distant fifteen miles.

JAMES G. BELL.

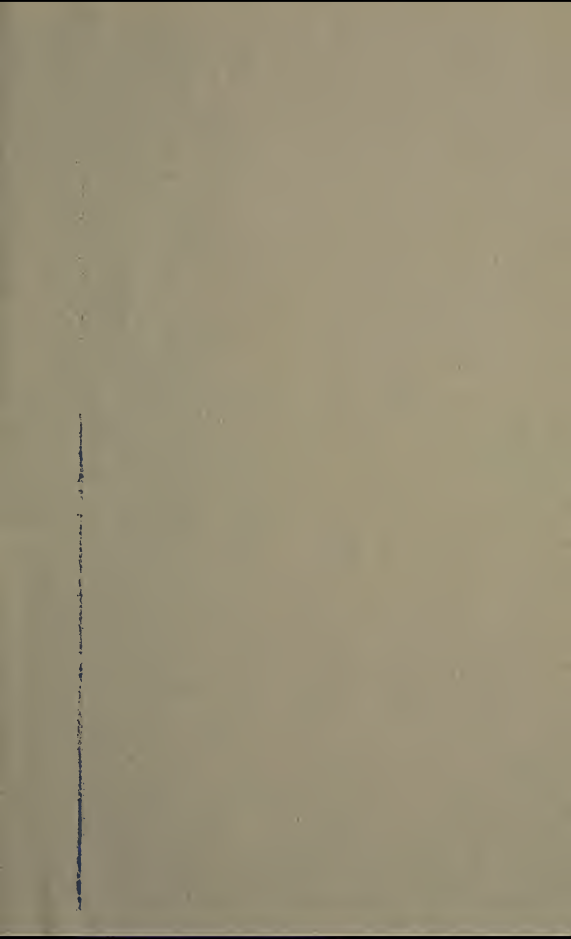
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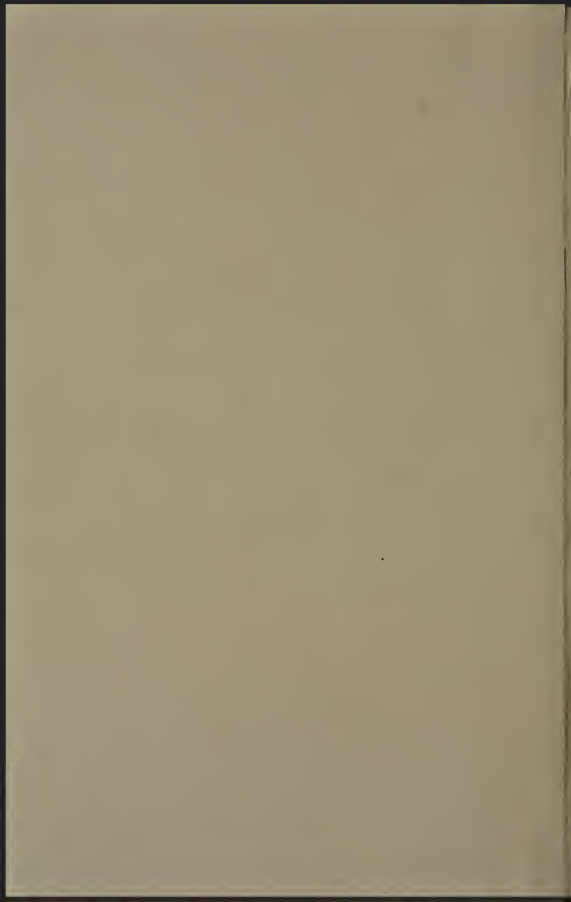
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